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COUPLE AND FAMILY RESOURCE CONSISTENCY PATTERNS AND COPING

by



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ABSTRACT

Families at the adolescent stage of the family life cycle experience many new and different challenges which may result in the family experiencing stress. Both the amount and type of resources have been suggested as factors which may assist families in adjusting and adapting to stressful life events. Consistency or agreement among family members on various aspects of family life has been alluded to as being important in helping families to deal effectively with the events they encounter. The purpose of this study was to investigate the nature of family agreement or consistency on selected resources and the relationship between the identified resource consistency patterns and coping. Resource consistency patterns in this study referred to the level of agreement of two or more family members regarding their assessment of a specific resource. Resource consistency patterns were analyzed at two levels: the couple level (husband and wife) and the family level (father, mother, and an adolescent child).

The study utilized secondary analysis of a data set from a national random sample of families in the United States (Olson et al., 1983). Four couple resource consistency patterns were identified: two consistent and two inconsistent patterns. Eight family resource consistency patterns emerged: two consistent, two inconsistent-parent coalition, and four inconsistent-containing a variety of parent-adolescent coalitions.

The couple level of analysis indicated that the majority of couples were resource consistent, with the greatest percentage of couples located in the resource consistent-low group. At the family level of analysis, a greater percentage of families was located in each

of the resource consistent groups than in any of the resource inconsistent groups. The largest percentage of families was obtained in the resource consistent-low group. A Chi Square Goodness of Fit Test identified that the observed distributions in each group differed significantly from that which would be expected by chance.

Analysis of Variance was utilized to test hypotheses related to membership in a particular couple or family resource consistency group and couple and family coping scores. Coping scores were assessed as a mean score and a discrepancy score. Findings of the ANOVA tests indicated that there were statistically significant differences between the mean coping scores of different resource consistency groups on three of the five couple resources: marital satisfaction, sexual relationship, and personality issues. Couples in the consistent-high groups had higher coping scores as predicted. There were no statistically significant differences between the discrepancy coping scores for various resource consistency groups on any of the couple resources studied. Analysis of the resource consistency patterns of mother, father, and adolescent child did not result in any statistically significant findings between the mean scores of various resource consistency groups for the two family resources studied. This was true utilizing either the mean coping score or the discrepancy coping score.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER		PAGE
I.	STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM	1
	Introduction	1
	Family and Stress	3
	Stress and Resources	4
	Statement of the Problem	6
	Definition of Term	7
	Assumptions	8
	Delimitations	9
	Importance of the Study	9
II.	LITERATURE REVIEW	11
	Introduction	11
	Family Stress	11
	Stressors	13
	Stressor Events During the Adolescent Stage . .	15
	Family Response to Stressors	20
	Summary	22
	Coping	23
	Introduction	23
	The Nature of Family Coping	24
	Effectiveness of Coping Strategies	32
	Summary	35
	Resources and Family Coping	35
	The Nature of Resources	36

Role of Resources in Coping	40
Role of Resource Consistency in Coping	46
Definition of Consistency	46
Measurement of Consistency	47
Consistency Between Family Members and Coping. .	49
III. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK	50
Conceptual Approaches to Family Stress and Coping . .	53
Hill's ABCX Crisis Model	54
Process of Adaptation or Recovery From Crisis	57
Burr's Model	59
Double ABCX Model	65
The Operationalization of the Double ABCX Model . .	68
The Nature of the Family Unit	69
The Principle of Consistency	72
Summary	75
Hypothesis for This Study	76
Couple Level	76
Family Level	76
IV. RESEARCH METHODS	77
The Original Study	77
The Sample and Sampling Procedure	77
Comparison with the National Gallop Survey . . .	79
Demographic Characteristics: Stage Four Adolescent Stage	80
Data Collection	82
Instrumentation	83

The Secondary Analysis	83
The Sample	83
Selection of Variables	84
Measurement of Independent Variables	87
Couple Level	87
Family Level	88
Measurement of Dependent Variable	89
Instrumentation for Resource Variables: Couple . .	91
Instrumentation for Resource Variables: Family . .	93
Instrumentation: Dependent Variable	94
Data Analysis	95
Secondary Analysis	95
Level of Analysis	96
Couple Scores	97
Family Scores	99
Method of Analysis	99
Research Question One	99
Research Question Two	100
Research Question Three	100
Research Question Four	101
V. RESULTS	102
Description of the Sample	102
The Research Questions	103
Question One	103
Question Two	110
Question Three	113
Marital Satisfaction	117

Personality Issues	117
Sexual Relationship	118
Family and Friends	118
Financial Management	118
Question Four	121
Family Strengths	121
Quality of Life	122
VI. DISCUSSION OF RESULTS	123
Question One	123
Major Findings	124
Discussion	125
Question Two	128
Major Findings	128
Discussion	130
Question Three	133
Major Findings	133
Discussion	134
Question Four	139
Major Findings	139
Discussion	139
Limitations	140
Suggestions for Further Research	141
References	145
Appendix A	156
Appendix B	164
Appendix C	168

LIST OF TABLES

Table		
4.1	Sample by Stage - Original Study	80
5.1	Percentage Distribution Couple Resource Consistency Patterns	106
5.2	Results Chi Square Goodness of Fit For Couple Resources	108
5.3	Statistically Significant McNemar Tests for Couple Level Variables by Groups	109
5.4	Percentage Distribution of Family Resource Consistency Patterns	112
5.5	Results of the Chi Square Goodness of Fit for Family Level Resources	114
5.6	Statistically Significant McNemar Test for Family Level Variables by Resource Consistency Groups	115
5.7	Analysis of Variance for Couple Resource Consistency Patterns and Group Mean Coping Score	119

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure		
3.1	Hill's Roller Coaster Profile of Adjustment to Crisis	57
3.2	Burr's Propositions About Families Under Stress	64
4.1	Couple Resource Consistency Patterns	88
4.2	Family Resource Consistency Patterns	90

CHAPTER I

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Introduction

The adolescent stage of the family life cycle brings with it many new and different challenges. As well, demographic data provides evidence that the number of challenging events encountered by today's North American families is increasing as compared to past generations. At the same time, it must also be acknowledged that the majority of families cope in some manner with these varying events, some more effectively than others. Researchers continue to search for answers to the question: what makes it possible for some families to cope well and others to cope poorly with the various life events they encounter?

Interest in family stress and coping may be traced back to pioneers like Burgess (1926), Angell (1936) and Hill (1949). During the 1960's it was identified as one of the areas of research which produced the greatest amount of theory (Broderick, 1970). The seventies continued to produce a vast amount of literature, both theoretical and empirical, which has made this area a key one in the study of the family. The decade review article on family stress and coping by McCubbin, Joy, Cauble, Comeau, Patterson and Neddle (1980) details this productive period. These authors saw four main domains of research being emphasized during this period: "family response to non-normative events; family response to normative transitions over the life cycle; the nature and importance of family psychological resources and perceptions; and the nature of social support and coping in the

management of stress" (p. 855). The third domain highlighted resources and focused on personal resources, family internal resources and social support and coping. This work however has only begun to identify specific resource factors which distinguish between families who do or do not cope well.

George's (as cited in Olson et al., 1983) and Pearlin and Schooler's (1978) work is illustrative of efforts that have been made to identify particular personal resources which might be available to a family in time of stress. Hansen and Johnson (1979), cautioned that the mere possession of a resource is not enough. Perception of personal resources is also crucial and may be generative of future research.

The look beyond merely identifying types and amounts of personal resources has encouraged the study of the family as a unit of analysis. Examples of questions which arise with respect to the perception of resources are: Is there a family perception of resource level and availability? If there is a family perception, is parental perception the crucial component. If there is no family perception, how discrepant are family members' perceptions? What impact do discrepancies between family members' perceptions have on their coping ability?

It would appear from this brief analysis of previous study of the resource variable in the stress and coping process, that further identification and measurement of this family perception of resources might be a fruitful avenue on which to continue the search for factors which distinguish between families who are effective in coping and those who are not.

Family And Stress

The family as a developing unit is more than the sum of its parts. The interaction of family members with particular personalities is what makes each family unique. Therefore, a family is not only a network of individuals who reside together over a period of time and are related to each other in some ways; it is also a network of individuals who interact intimately. This definition of the family recognizes the family as a system.

The family is dynamic in that it grows and changes over time. Some of these changes are the result of individual and family development, others are the result of societal changes which in turn impact upon the family unit. Consequently families encounter numerous predictable and unpredictable events (McCubbin, 1980; Boss, 1980; Bell, Johnson, McGillicuddy-De Lise & Segal, 1980). Some of these events may cause stress.

Seldom are families at any time dealing with a single stressor rather stresses tend to pile up (McCubbin, et al., 1980; Olson, McCubbin, Barnes, Larsen, Muxen & Wilson, 1982). Impacting on the present event can be stresses resulting: from past unresolved events, transitional changes, initial attempts made by the family to deal with the present event and the ambiguity of change (McCubbin & Patterson, 1982). Even normal everyday hassles such as establishing curfew hours, bedtime procedures, and handling homework responsibilities can pile up resulting in an exacerbation of family stress (Tanner-Nelson & Nelson, 1981).

Stress and Resources

McCubbin (1979, p. 237) depicts the family as a "reactor to stress and as a manager of resources within the family unit with which to combat and control change within the family system." Some families, those which are creative, possess and can develop additional personal and family resources which help them to respond to stressors. Therefore some families learn to implement resources in various situations. The responses of other less fortunate families are not creative but their reactions are merely responsive and are not conducive to satisfactory problem resolution. Resources are thus an important dimension in the study of family coping processes.

Family and individual resources have received attention from a variety of perspectives. Most research dealing with family resources has compared the level of resources of husband and wife and detailed the resultant power structure. Such a resource theory of power contends that the ability to control the behavior of others in decisions rests with the person possessing the most resources (Blood & Wolfe, 1960). This theory implies that resources are exchanged between partners to gain personal power or to have their needs met, this would suggest that partners frequently do not possess the same resources or in the same proportions. The majority of the studies testing resource theory, obtained data from one family member, the wife, and focused on the personal resources of education, occupation, status and income giving a limited perspective on family resource patterns.

Home management research has also made reference to the resources the family may possess. Deacon and Firebaugh (1975) proposed that the

most valuable resource a family can possess is the ability to analyze, synthesize and reformulate its varied insights and experiences creatively into new approaches to situations. This ability was called "resourcefulness" (Deacon & Firebaugh, 1975, p. 160). Initial research in this area focused predominantly on the importance of the resources of time, space, money and energy to home management. Resources in this study were viewed as individual qualities rather than as a family quality.

Family stress researchers and theorists (Angell, 1936; Burr, 1972; Hill, 1958; McCubbin et al., 1976; Olson et al., 1983) also made reference to resources. Resources from this perspective were viewed as important mediating variables which influenced the amount of disorganization, disruption and/or incapacitation experienced by families encountering stressful life events. Several personal, marital and family resources were identified as being beneficial for families to possess. Much of this research relied upon the response of one family member, mainly the wife. The data obtained however were utilized as being representative of other family members' perceptions or of the pattern for the total family unit.

It is apparent that in past research investigating resources and especially family resources, the family seldom has been studied as a unit. Little information has been gathered on the resource characteristics of the total family unit or of more than one or two members. Furthermore, the detailed examination of relative levels of resources of family members and how these different levels form a

pattern has not been documented or related to the family's ability to cope with stress.

Statement of the Problem

The present study proposes to look at questions related to the nature of family resource patterns and the relationship between these resource patterns and coping ability for a group of families with adolescent children. Both couple and family resource patterns shall be explored.

The following research questions give this research focus and direction:

1. a) What is the nature of resource consistency patterns on selected resources for couples at the adolescent stage of the family life cycle?
2. What is the nature of resource consistency patterns on selected resources for families at the adolescent stage of the life cycle?
3. What is the relationship between the particular marital resource consistency pattern of selected marital resources and the couple's ability to cope?
4. What is the relationship between the particular family resource consistency pattern of selected family resources and the family's ability to cope?

Definition of Terms

In the following section, the terms which will be utilized in this study are defined.

Stressor - is any life event which changes or has the potential to create change in the family system (Burr, 1973; Olson et al., 1983).

Stress - a state of tension experienced by individuals and/or families arising from actual or perceived demands which tax or exceed their resources and calls for adjustment or adaptive behavior (Olson, McCubbin, Barnes, Larsen, Muxen & Wilson, 1983; Lazarus & Folkman, 1982).

Coping - a complex process which includes the efforts taken by individuals and/or families to manage demands which have been appraised as taxing or exceeding the resources possessed by individuals and/or families (Antonovsky, 1979; Lazarus, Averill & Opton, 1974; Maynard, Maynard, McCubbin & Shao, 1980; Pearlin & Schooler, 1978).

Crisis - refers to the amount of disorganization, disruption and/or incapacitation experienced by the family when resources are taxed or exceeded (Burr, 1973).

Family - a social system of interrelated and integrated members whose major functions include physical maintenance of its members, addition of family members through reproduction or adoption, maintenance of order within the family unit, maintenance of family morale and production and distribution of goods and services necessary for maintaining the family system.

Resources - are the personal, marital and family strengths which help families cope more effectively with the demands they encounter.

Pattern - a combination of qualities, acts, tendencies forming a consistent or characteristic arrangement (Random House, 1966, p. 1058).

Resource Consistency Pattern - is the combination of qualities or profile which describes the level of agreement of two or more family members regarding their individual assessment of a specific resource.

Assumptions

This study is based upon the following assumptions:

1. That individual family members can assess relative levels of resources in their family.
2. That absolute perceptual agreement about particular events or levels of characteristics in the family is rarely achieved.
3. That answers to questions on a questionnaire are reasonable approximations of individual perceptions.
4. That it is important to study more than one family member to arrive at descriptions of family patterns.

Delimitations

1. The research employed secondary analysis of data collected by Olson and associates (1983) in a study of over one thousand families at all stages of the family life cycle. Only the data obtained from complete families with adolescent children (ages 13-18) were utilized in this secondary analysis. The data were collected using a questionnaire thus assesses perceptions rather than actual behavior.

2. The resources examined are limited to those identified as being critical at the adolescent stage by Olson et al. (1983) in the primary study.

3. There are many interpretations of the concept "consistency." The particular interpretation employed in this study views "consistency" as agreement within a range rather than absolute agreement. Couple and family agreement was also arrived at by statistical creation of a new system variable from independently obtained individual questionnaire responses rather than by using a family process approach or by observing a family process.

4. The couple in this study refers to the husband and wife, who have been separated out from the total family unit for analytical purposes.

5. The family in this study refers to husband, wife and an adolescent child. Therefore, all members of a particular family unit may not be included in the analysis.

Importance of the Study

The adolescent stage of the family life cycle seems to be more stressful than any other stage (Davis, 1940; Hamburg, 1974; Olson et al., 1983). It is during this stage that the family encounters many developmental changes for parents, children and the family. Concurrently during this stage, the family encounters the stresses associated with the adolescent's desire for increased independence from the family, the parents' own resolution of midlife issues and the stresses of relating to aging parents and grandparents (Sheehy, 1977;

Olson et al., 1983; Hamburg, 1974). Further, stress may be experienced by families due to the lack of congruence between parents and adolescents within the same family in the way they perceive family issues and dynamics (Davis, 1940; Olson et al., 1983; Jessop, 1981). Thus, parents and adolescents within the same family may be said to live in rather different worlds (Olson et al., 1983). Some families appear to handle these stressful perceptual or behavioral differences well, others have difficulty.

The importance of the quantity, quality and availability of resources in the coping process has been well documented. However these factors alone are not of sufficient power to explain differences between families and their ability to deal with stressful events. For example families with a large number of resources sometimes flounder and conversely families with inadequate resources sometimes do well. There appears to be sufficient reason to look at other aspects of the resource variable in this coping process. Lewis, Beavers, Gossett & Phillips (1976) in their study of healthy families noted that there was "no single thread" which described families which functioned adequately. In fact there were many different patterns which accomplished this end. The theoretical work of the 70's and 80's called for continued efforts to refine theoretical constructs in the 80's. Such refinement will not only build theory, but may have the potential of giving direction to the many practitioners who work with families who are attempting to deal with the stressors of twentieth century life.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

The reason why some individuals and/or families withstand stressful events while others do not has interested many researchers. Resources and coping are two variables which have been identified as important in decreasing family vulnerability to stress. However the amount and type of resources alone do not provide sufficient explanatory power for determining whether families can cope or not. The hope is entertained that the concept of resource consistency will add to the explanatory power of the relationship between resources and coping. The purpose of this study is to determine the relationship between resource consistency and coping. The purpose of this literature review is to:

1. discuss the stressors which families encounter, especially during the adolescent stage of the family life cycle.
2. detail research on family coping which has dealt with the role of resources in this process.
3. identify research on the role of resource consistency patterns in the coping process.

Family Stress

The concept of family stress is an ambiguous concept which has frequently been utilized without being explicitly defined. Recently Olson et al. (1983, p. 119) drawing from a variety of disciplines, defined family stress as "a state of tension arising from actual or

perceived demands that call for adjustment or adaptive behavior." Stress as a "state" can only be observed by the changes or responses it produces (Selye, 1956). Evidence of such changes may be physiological, psychological, behavioral, emotional or social in nature. Traditionally, stress has been viewed as a phenomenon having detrimental affects. Research supported this belief by focusing on negative responses of individual family members and families to stressors such as delinquency (Korn, 1968; Miller, 1958) and divorce (Defrain & Erick, 1981; Bloom, Asher, & White, 1978) or on families experiencing crisis as a result of war separations (Boss, 1980; Hill, 1949; McCubbin et al. 1976), or the great depression (Angell, 1936). Even though stress is viewed as prevalent, it is not necessarily problematic or destructive. In fact, some stress may have a facilitative role. Channey (1980), for example proposed that too little stress in one's life may result in staleness, boredom and lack of resilience. He further postulates that it is necessary for families to experience stress, because it can stimulate families to achieve necessary developmental processes as well as increase their sense of competence. On the other hand, an excessive amount of stress can result in the family experiencing disorganization and disruption as illustrated by the studies of families experiencing crisis (Angell, 1936; Hill, 1958). Thus, the relationship between stress and family functioning appears to be curvilinear in nature, that is both too little and too much may be debilitating, whereas a moderate amount may have the potential to stimulate movement towards family goals.

Stressors

The demands, actual or perceived, which result in the family system experiencing stress may originate from a variety of sources. For example stress may result from, predictable events triggered by individual family members' developmental changes or developmental changes occurring in the family unit, or from unpredictable events which arise from changes in society, natural disasters or from individual family members' thoughts, behaviors or emotions (Olson et al., 1983). The events mentioned in the previous statement are frequently referred to as stressors. A stressor therefore can be defined as any life event which changes or has the potential to create change in the family system (Burr, 1973; Olson et al., 1983).

Many stressors have been investigated. Some examples of stressor events include: natural disasters, war separation (Angell, 1936; Boss, 1980; Hill, 1958), changes in employment status (Thomas, McCabe & Berry, 1980), chronic illness (McCubbin et al., 1983), transition to parenthood (Le Masters, 1957; Rossi, 1968), entry of children into the school system (Hock, McKerney, Hock, Treolo & Stewart, 1980) and launching of children (Stierlin, 1974; Levinson, 1978). Characteristically, this research has focused on one identified stressor with attention frequently directed towards the negative consequences of stress.

The idea of families experiencing multiple stressors at one time has recently received increased consideration (McCubbin et al., 1980; Imig, 1981; Olson et al., 1983). McCubbin proposed that seldom, if ever, are families dealing with only one stressor but that families

experience demands resulting from past unresolved events, the present event, attempts of the family to deal with the stressor and the uncertainty of the situation. Imig (1981) strongly supports the need to recognize that families are experiencing an accumulation of life events at any one time.

One of the first attempts made to categorize identified family stressors was by Hill (1958). The categories identified were dismemberment (loss of member), accession (loss of morale and family unity) or a combination of demoralization and dismemberment or accession. He further acknowledged two additional categories proposed by Burgess, that of sudden change in family status and conflict among family members in the conception of their roles.

Hill's classification of stressors, did not encompass all the stressor events families may encounter. Recently, events have been classified as being either developmental or situational events. Developmental events refers to those events which arise from the normal growth and development of individual family members or the total family system. Situational events are unexpected events arising from such occurrences as societal changes or natural disasters which impact on the family unit. Situational events also result from individual family members' behavior such as illness, deviance, or demands for increased independence.

One of the best known instruments used for assessing stress is the Social Readjustment Scale (SRRS) developed by Holmes and Rahe (1967). This scale is used to assess an individual's level of stress. In an attempt to assess family events and the pile-up of life events (both

maturational and situational) experienced by the family, McCubbin, Patterson and Wilson (1981) developed the Family Inventory of Life Events and Change (FILE). The scale consists of nine categories. They are: intra-family strain (conflict and parenting strains), marital strains, pregnancy and childbearing strains, finance and business (family finance, family business), work - family transitions and strains (work transitions, work strains and family transitions), illness and family "care" strains (illness onset and child care, chronic illness strains, dependency strains), losses, transitions "in and out", and family legal violations. Items of FILE emphasize change of sufficient magnitude that "would require some adjustment in the regular pattern of interaction of family members" (McCubbin et al., 1981, p. 21). All life experiences considered stressful by one individual within the family are considered as having an impact on the total family. This reflects the belief that what affects one member affects other members to some extent.

Stressor Events During the Adolescent Stage

"No stage of the family life cycle seems to be more stressful than the adolescent phase" (Olson et al., 1982b, p. 342). Several researchers (Davis, 1940; Hamburg, 1974; Rapoport et al., 1976; Sebal, 1997) reviewing the literature pertaining to the adolescent stage noted that historically this stage has been viewed as a time of storm and stress. Kingsley Davis (1940, p. 266) strongly suggested that conflict between "the old and the young is normal in human groups." He attributes this arising from three main factors: "(1) the basic age or

birth-cycle differential between parent and child, (2) the decelerating rate of socialization with advancing age, and (3) the resulting intrinsic difference between old and young on the physiological, psycho-social and sociological planes" (Davis, 1940, p. 274). Davis' work implied parent-youth conflict was inevitable, yet there is not consensus on this issue. In recent years social scientists have questioned the inevitability of parent adolescent conflict (Bandura, 1972; Hollingshead, 1974; LaRossa, 1981). Bandura argues that the relationship between parents and their adolescents is characterized as cooperative and mutually satisfactory rather than conflict ridden. The particular perspective one takes is undoubtedly influenced by the elements one examines: the situational elements, the developmental givens, or the process elements in the parent-child relationship.

The following research details the stressors during the adolescent stage of the family. Klein and Hill (1980) submitted that the number of stressful events increased during the adolescent stage. Olson and associates' (1983) recent study provides further confirmation of this notion. Their study, which compared all stages of the family life cycle, indicated that a greater number of stressors and strains occurred during the adolescent and launching phase of the family life cycle than at any other stage and that following the launching phases families experience a remarkable drop in the number of demands they experience. Further to this, they indicated that the type of stressors and strains that families experienced differed depending on the stage of the life cycle the family is in.

What are the stressors that families experience during the adolescent stage? Frequently, researchers have focused on specific social problems, unusual events and major family transitions rather than attempting to determine the common stressors that most families encounter. Recently, Rapoport, Rapoport and Sterelitz's (1976) selective review of family literature identified general areas of concern that parents encounter during the adolescent stage. These areas include personal challenges facing parents in mid-life; issues relating to parent-child conflicts; and, issues relating to factors that impact upon the marital relationship. Further Rapoport and associates (1976) synthesized the literature to identify common factors that contributed to the family experiencing demands. Each issue as presented by Rapoport et al. (1976) will be summarized.

Mid-life Challenges. Frequently the adolescent stage of the family life cycle is a time in the parents' lives when assessment of accomplishments are compared with their desired expectations. It is also a time that parents deal with the realization that the peak of their career and learning power may have been achieved. Adults also come to grips with their own mortality. This may result in many strong feelings and emotions. This period is a time of determining whether they have sufficient individual and family resources to meet the demands of the "here and now" as well as the future.

During this period, parents are also the middle generation, and experience obligations in both directions. That is, parents experience demands of raising their own children and caring for aged parents.

This places increased demands on the parents' resources of time and energy, leaving little for their needs.

Another issue that many families deal with during this time period is the event of the wife-mother re-entering employment outside the home. Re-entry into the work world can be facilitated by supportive attitudes of society, and individual family members, at the same time this event challenges the family's organization, and operations, and the result may be increased demands on all family members.

Parent-child conflicts. Rapid societal changes and social complexity are viewed as two major factors contributing to parent-child conflicts. Confrontation over limits set by parents were considered by the reviewers to be the most frequent and problematic issues in the lives of families during the adolescent stage. The issues often involved choice of friends, use of motor vehicles, curfew, dress and hair styles. Other areas that may result in conflict, arise from the rejection by the adolescent of parental values, attitudes, and beliefs.

Marital relationships. The majority of parents in the adolescent stage have been married on the average of twenty years. During this period there is a gradual decline in couples' experiencing satisfaction with their sexual relationship, the demonstration of affection, and sharing of interests. This in turn may result in parents experiencing marital dissatisfaction and thus increasing the potential for divorce.

Olson et al., (1983) in their study presented a very comprehensive and systematic overview of the stressors which families experience throughout the life cycle. During the adolescent stage, the stressors

experienced by families as reported by husband and wife clustered in intra-family strains (30%), finance and business strains (60%) and work-family transition strains (10%). Of these, the three most frequently cited stressors were the intra-family strains, increased amount of outside activities in which children are involved (68%), and increase in the number of chores that do not get done (48%) and an increased strain on family money for food, clothing, energy, home care (62%) (Olson et al. 1983, p. 127).

Olson et al., (1983) proposed that family stress results from situational factors. It may also have to do with the lack of congruency in expectations and needs between family members and especially between parents and their adolescents. They compared responses of family members across a number of variables (e.g. perceived levels of quality of life, family satisfaction, parent-adolescent communication) and concluded that parents and adolescents "live in rather different worlds" (Olson et al., 1983, p. 342). When looking specifically at stressors, parents and adolescents agreed on the most problematic topics but parents emphasized financial strains as one of the major demands. Adolescents, on the other hand, emphasized the day-to-day hassles which trouble them. Specifically, adolescents focused on the parent-child conflicts revolving around such issues as use of car, friends, social activities and getting jobs done.

One might conclude that stress is an inevitable part of family life. Families encounter many events which have the potential for producing stress. The conditions which may contribute to an increasing amount of stress are evident during the adolescent stage of the

family's life cycle: developmental changes, lack of congruency of expectations, and strained resources. In family life, preventing some potentially stressful situations is only one part of satisfactory interaction, a second is the ability to deal with these events when they occur.

Family Response to Stressors

All families encounter many different types of life events. These life events have the potential for creating stress in the family unit. However, it has been repeatedly noted that the impact of an event on the lives of individuals and the total family system varies (Antonovsky, 1979, Burr, 1973; Hansen & Johnson, 1979; Hill, 1957; Olson et al., 1983).

Hill (1958) noted that, depending on the origin of the event, stressors have varying effects on the family. Hill (1958) described the source of the event as being internal or external to the family. Generally events which arise external to the family tend to have a solidifying effect on the family. On the other hand, events which originate within the family tend to have a disorganizing effect on the family, in that they reflect the inadequacy of the family. As well, families vary in the amount of stress experienced when encountering various events. Hansen and Hill (1979) observed that some families appear to be almost immune to stress, while other families experiencing the same event, experience disorganization, incapacitation and disruption. Antonovsky (1979) similarly observed and questioned, what makes it possible for some individuals to respond positively and others

to fall apart when confronted by similar events. Many family researchers have attempted to find the answer to this question in order to understand the difference between families and their ability to successfully handle stressors.

Explanation of the family's response to events producing stress in the family has been provided by a number of theorists and researchers (Burr, 1973; Hill, 1958; McCubbin et al., 1981). The impact of life events on the family have predominantly utilized Hill's (1958) classic ABCX crisis model in an attempt to explain the differences between families in their ability to cope with stress. Hill (1958) proposed that his model explained the difference between families who were crisis prone and those who were not. He concluded that the explanation for crisis proneness is primarily in the family's definition of the event and the family's crisis meeting resources (Hill, 1958, p. 308). The majority of research investigating the family stress process has focused on families who have not been able to successfully deal with the stressful event and who have thus experienced crisis. Consequently, this research provides much information about those families experiencing stress that fell into processes that were destructive to the family unit. It did not provide information about families who were able to manage the stress which they experienced.

McCubbin et al.'s (1981) double ABCX model (which will be described in greater detail in Chapter III) suggests that families experiencing stress may achieve outcomes which may vary from bon-adaptation to maladaptation. This model presents the idea that the impact of an event on the family varies, with some families achieving

growth and development of its members and the family as a unit; some may maintain stability; whereas other families fall apart and experience crisis. The two major variables in this model which influence the family stress process are resources and coping.

Summary

Family stress is an inevitable part of family life. No longer is family stress viewed as an affective state experienced only by families experiencing crisis. It is apparent that family stress results from various life events encountered by families and that such stress requires effort by the family in order to deal with the changes that result.

Life events vary in the amount of stress they generated within the family. Some events result in families experiencing a high level of stress; others may only generate a minimal amount of stress. Similarly, families vary in their ability to manage the stress they experience. Some families are capable of managing their stress well and are challenged by the opportunity. Thus, growth and development of individual family members and the family unit may be achieved. Other families, lack this ability and are only capable of maintaining stability. Others still are overwhelmed and experience crisis and possible dissolution.

Understanding family response to stress provoking events has been the focus of much research. The major focus of family stress research has been on families experiencing crisis. As a result, the body of

knowledge about crisis resolution has grown, but less is known about families who experience stress but not crisis.

Family stress research, including empirical and theoretical work suggests the importance of family resources and coping in the differential management of stress. The growing body of literature about "healthy" or well-functioning families also gives support to the utilization of these variables in the management of stress.

The next section will look closely at coping: the definition, components, and strategies.

Coping

Introduction

"Large segments of family life are humdrum and routine" (Reiss & Oliveri, 1980, p. 431). However, as identified in the previous section, the family is also subjected to numerous life events, some of which result in the family experiencing stress. It is then that the family must initiate some effort in order to manage the stress and return to the more orderly routines of daily life. Increasing interest in understanding those families which have met the challenges of various life events without having experienced crisis has promoted interest in the concept of coping.

The idea of family problems, problem solving, and coping have been investigated by researchers from a variety of disciplines which are interested in understanding both how families deal with daily hassles as well as problems of greater magnitude. In discussing the concept of

coping, predominately two bodies of literature will be utilized, that of family stress and coping and family problem solving. To a lesser degree psychological literature which has investigated individual coping will also be incorporated.

The Nature of Family Coping

The term coping has been used in a variety of ways, frequently relying on the context to make the meaning clear (Lazarus, Averill, & Opton, 1974). Commonly, such terms as mastery, defense, and coping have been used interchangeably. Coping however has been differentiated from these other concepts (White, 1974; Lazarus et al., 1974). One differentiation is that defense is an automatic response to danger and attack (White, 1974). Implied in this description of defense is that the response is based on instinct - the fight or flight notion. Mastery, on the other hand refers to the outcome. That is, mastery has occurred where demands have been surmounted and the efforts taken by the individual or family have come to a successful conclusion (White, 1974). There is increasing agreement among a number of researchers that coping is a more complex process than defense and mastery which includes the cognitive and behavioral efforts taken by individuals and families to manage the demands (needs, opportunities, threats, pressures, challenges) they experience which tax or exceed their resources (Antonovsky, 1979; Lazarus et al., 1974; Maynard, Maynard, McCubbin & Shao, 1980; Pearlin & Schooler, 1978). The cognitive and behavioral efforts mentioned in the previous definition frequently are referred to as coping strategies and are thus the means through which

demands experienced by the family are overcome. McCubbin et al. (1980) further identified that the efforts or coping strategies utilized by families included both intra-family strategies as well as transactions with the larger community. Such a definition of coping does several things; first, it emphasizes the complexity of the coping process; second, it acknowledges the active participation of families in dealing with the demands they experience; third, it allows for the inclusion of all the efforts or strategies utilized by families, thus both the negative as well as the positive efforts can be considered; and last, it emphasizes that coping is more than a routine or automatic response to demands. In order to more fully understand the concept of coping, it is useful to discuss four additional salient characteristics of coping: coping as a process, coping as interpersonal interaction, coping as a means to an end and coping effectiveness.

Coping as a process. Hill (1958) was one of the first researchers to describe family coping. His work conceptualized coping in process terms, even though he did not mention the term. He envisioned family coping as a roller coaster course of adjustment that involved an initial period of disorganization followed by recovery and reorganization. Hill, however, did not elaborate on this process.

Olson et al. (1983, p. 136) described "coping as a life long process that has no fixed beginning or end point." In other words coping is never static, but is a dynamic process that develops and changes over the life history of the family. Changes in coping that occur are a result of the number and severity of demands experienced, the amount of disruption experienced in the family and the availability

and utilization of intra-family and community resources (Olson et al., 1983).

Reiss et al. (1980, p. 439) drawing upon the problem solving works of Aldous (1971) and Argyris (1965a, 1965b) conceptualized the family's response to stress as consisting of three stages, which were described as: 1. "definition of the event and search for additional information, 2. initial response and trial solution, and 3. final decision or closing position and family commitment to this." They regarded these stages as three conceptual vantage points for examining the family's response to stressful events. Nine tasks of coping were outlined identifying that within each task there are two contrasting coping strategies. For example, in task one, "owning up", the two contrasting coping strategies were identified as either acceptance or rejection of responsibility for responding to the stressful event. Reiss and Oliveri numbered each task, but clearly noted that this was meant as a reference tool and not to imply that the coping process was a sequential process. They emphasized that families may begin with any task, skip some and end almost anywhere.

More recently McCubbin and Patterson (1983) depicted coping as a process of achieving balance in the family system and that this process consisted of three stages: resistance, restructuring and consolidation. The first stage was designated "adjustment", whereas the other two stages were viewed as "adaptation." For example, in the family adjustment phase - resistance - when families experience demands, the family attempts to make adjustments in their pattern of interaction

that results in the least amount of disruption in the family's well established patterns.

The adaptation phases involve the awareness by all family members that change in their existing structure must occur in order to restore some stability and/or improve family satisfaction in the family system. Once these changes have been made, additional effort is required by the family in order to achieve consolidation and bring the entire family together at this new level of functioning (McCubbin et al., 1983). Coping strategies utilized by families during restructuring differ from those utilized during consolidation. McCubbin et al. (1983, p. 28) stated that families who successfully restructure, "employ the adaptive coping strategy of system maintenance, designed to keep the family functioning together as a unit, to maintain the esteem of members, and to maintain family morale." In attempts to consolidate, families utilize coping efforts of synergizing, interfacing, compromising and system maintenance.

Coping as interpersonal interaction. Family coping, unlike individual coping, involves the collective responses of family members (Olson et al., 1983). The collective response of the family is not simply the sum of each individual family member's ideas or responses but includes the interaction that occurs between family members as well as transactions between the family unit and the community (Olson et al., 1983; McCubbin et al., 1980).

Klein and Hill's (1979) work in problem solving effectiveness has relevance here as well. Family problem solving is viewed as an interpersonal interaction involving an exchange of perspectives and

ideas, and co-ordination of decisions and actions which requires both persuasive and empathetic skills. They further emphasized that the interactional nature of problem solving is dependent upon the skill and competency level of individual family members. This is to suggest that some family problem solving, especially at the early stages of the family life cycle may involve only the parents. However as the communication and cognitive competency of children increase, the number of family members who may participate in the process increases. They propose that the amount of family problem solving interaction relates in a curvilinear way to the family life cycle phase, with the peak occurring during the period when children are adolescents and young adults (Klein & Hill, 1979).

McCubbin and Patterson (1983) intimated that the interactional nature of family coping may further be dependent upon the nature of the demands encountered, the amount of disturbance experienced and the change required by the family system. For example, demands which result in minimal change in the family system may only require the individual affected by the demands to initiate coping strategies which result in family stability. On the other hand, the demands experienced by the entire family may require the equal participation of all family members.

Coping as a means to an end. Coping within this view is defined as the means by which individuals and/or families resolve the demands experienced. When described in this way, coping strategies have been the focus of interest to researchers, and clinicians alike. Coping strategies are a combination of intra-family and community resources

utilized by the family to manage the demands experienced. McCubbin and Patterson (1983) clearly describe the purpose of coping strategies as being to:

1. eliminate and/or avoid stressors and strains,
2. manage the hardships encountered as a result of the various events experienced,
3. maintain the integrity and morale of the family system,
4. acquire and develop resources to meet the demands,
5. implement changes in the family systems structure in order to accommodate the demands experienced.

One conclusion that may be made from the analysis of this list is that coping strategies which families may utilize serve many functions.

To enhance the understanding of coping, several approaches have been taken to identify particular strategies utilized by families or individuals in dealing with the particular stressors or demands encountered. Pearlin and Schooler (1978) focused on determining what strategies adult family members utilized in response to demands encountered in their role as parents, spouse, worker and homemaker. They chose these areas on the assumption that the majority of demands that individuals encounter, occur in normal everyday living. The subjects described seventeen different strategies utilized in the various roles these people encountered. These strategies were further categorized into three groups: strategies that modified the situation, responses which controlled the meaning of the event, and strategies that functioned to control the stress.

Other researchers attempting to identify coping strategies, focused on identifying strategies utilized by families challenged by specific events, for example, chronic illness (McCubbin et al., 1983); traumatic cord injuries (Cleveland, 1980); family members missing in action (Boss, 1980); war separation (McCubbin, Dahl, Lister, Benson & Robertson, 1976); membership in the police profession (Maynard et al., 1980); and parenthood (Miller & Sollie, 1980). In these studies and others, numerous strategies were utilized by families. For example, redefining the event to make it more manageable (McCubbin et al., 1976, 1983; Olson et al., 1983; Skinner, 1980; Tanner-Nelson & Nelson, 1981), seeking social support (McCubbin et al., 1983; Olson et al., 1983, Maynard et al., 1980; Unger & Powell, 1980; Ventura & Boss, 1983), redistribution and redefinition of roles and tasks (Boss, 1980; Keith & Schafer, 1980), and seeking spiritual support (McCubbin et al., 1976; Tanner-Nelson et al., 1981; Ventura et al., 1983) to name a few. Olson et al. (1983) identified five strategies: reframing, passive appraisal, acquiring social support, seeking spiritual support and mobilizing the family to acquire and accept help. These strategies may further be viewed as strategies utilized within the family system and strategies utilized in transaction with the community. Olson et al. (1983) referred to them as internal family coping strategies and external coping strategies.

The strategies which families utilize vary throughout the life cycle (Olson et al., 1983). It was noted that during the adolescent phase, coping strategies which actively sought resolution of the problem such as reframing, (the redefinition of problems as being

manageable) were helpful to families whereas during the retirement phase, families utilized coping strategies such as passive appraisal more frequently.

Mederer and Hill (1983) also proposed that the strategies utilized varies with the stressful events encountered. The determination of what strategies are utilized and under what conditions is considered to be a complex process and one that is not fully understood (Mengel, 1982). Turner (1982) stated that such factors as the family's coping style, the "typical, habitual preferences for ways of approaching problems" (Menaghan, 1983, p. 114), available resources, the emotional state of the individuals involved, perception of control, and the ambiguity of the outcome of the situation influenced the choice of a coping strategy.

The majority of research investigating family coping strategies have generally obtained information from only one family member. For example, Pearlin and Schooler (1979) identified the coping strategies of individuals experiencing stress created in their family roles. Other researchers such as Maynard et al. (1980), McCubbin (1979), Boss (1980) also described the coping strategies of individual family members and not the strategies utilized by the family as a collective entity. In studies where more than one family member have been used, husbands and wives have predominately been used as informants. Few studies have included children as informants when more than one family member has been included. In studies with more than one family member, differences between males and females were noted in the coping strategies utilized (Ammons, Nelson & Wodarski, 1982; Keith & Schooler,

1980; McCubbin et al., 1983; Olson et al., 1983; Ventura & Boss, 1983). For example, the findings from the study done by McCubbin et al. (1983) indicated that the strategies utilized by mothers were directed towards promoting family unity and expression of feelings. Conversely, strategies utilized by fathers were directed towards promoting cooperation, organization and control.

Olson et al. (1983) found significant differences between husband, wife and adolescent in the use of three of the five coping strategies identified in their study. These three strategies were: seeking spiritual support, seeking social support, and mobilizing formal support. Wives employed the coping strategies of spiritual support and formal supports more than husbands. Adolescents use of these coping strategies were lower than that of both their parents. Wives also emphasized the importance of social support more than their husbands. Adolescents' use of this strategy was somewhere between that of their parents. The coping strategies of reframing and passive appraisal showed no difference between family members.

Effectiveness of Coping Strategies

McCubbin et al. (1980) depicted coping efforts (strategies) as being directed towards decreasing the presence of factors which increase family vulnerability, strengthening or maintaining family resources which buffer the family from harm or disruption, reducing or eliminating the demands experienced and influencing the environment to alter the circumstance. Implicit in the above description of coping is the idea of effectiveness.

Several researchers (Boss, 1980; Maynard et al., 1980; McCubbin et al., 1976) compared the coping strategies of families who were successful in dealing with the stressors, with those of families who were less successful. These studies advocated that successful families utilized a variety of strategies, as well they utilized strategies which portrayed confidence and which actively sought resolution to the demands experienced. In comparison, families who did not deal as successfully with stressors tended to utilize avoidance type strategies.

Pearlin and Schooler's (1978) study of individuals experiencing normal everyday events, they described coping strategies as being situation specific. For example, in the parenting role, effective strategies were those which also encouraged family involvement and promoted a family's sense of competence in dealing with the events, whereas ineffective strategies were those that involved avoidance such as selective ignoring and passive acceptance.

Olson et al.'s (1983) study also indicated that families who coped effectively utilized reframing as one of their major strategies. On the other hand, families who experienced a high amount of stress utilized passive appraisal as their major strategy.

From the literature previously discussed, it is evident that there is no one single way to determine coping effectiveness. Menaghan's (1983) review of coping, suggested that one major issue has to do with how coping effectiveness should be measured. Her review suggests that researchers have utilized three approaches to determine effectiveness: perceived effectiveness (individually assessed effectiveness); observed

effectiveness (reduction of feelings of distress or depressed feelings); and problem reduction over time.

Klein and Hills' (1979, p. 519) model of problem solving effectiveness suggests there are two evaluative dimensions of the concept to be considered: (1) "the quality of solution, refers to the degree to which it meets some determinate standard", and (2) "the degree to which solutions are jointly accepted by family members." They further identified that little is known about the way these two evaluative dimensions actually operate during family problem solving and suggest that more research is needed which incorporates a range of possible measures of effectiveness. Klein and Hill (1979, p. 520) theorized that "family problem solving effectiveness will be influenced by the way in which family interaction is organized for problem solving." Four factors for analyzing family problem solving interaction were presented:

1. Amount of interaction which occurs. Such aspects as amount of verbal and nonverbal communication, the number of alternative solutions suggested, elaborations of language codes, amount of support and amount of conflict that occurs during family problem solving need to be considered;

2. Distribution of interactions. This aspect is concerned with evidence of leadership and the type of leadership that exists;

3. Sequencing of interaction. The observable steps that families follow when problem solving; and

4. Normality of interaction. The degree to which problem solving conforms to the existing standards about behavior in the family.

Problem solving effectiveness may be assessed according to these four factors.

Summary

Families vary in their ability to deal with the demands they encounter. Coping may be defined as a process which involves the development and use of strategies to manage the stressors which the family experienced. Coping strategies and their effectiveness have been investigated from a variety of perspectives. The conclusions which may be drawn from this section of the review are: coping is a process which develops and changes over the family's life cycle; a variety of strategies are utilized by families in different situations and that a combination of strategies may be better than one to cope with stress. To further achieve effectiveness the combination of strategies may be crucial, in that strategies which encourage families to actively resolve difficulties are more beneficial than are those that encourage avoidance of problems. Effectiveness of strategies utilized have been determined, based on the family's assessment of satisfaction, as well as from the researcher's assessment of family functioning.

The last section of the literature review contains a discussion of resources and the role of resource consistency in the coping process.

Resources and Family Coping

Family resources were described by Hill (1958) as a key variable in allowing families to cope with stress. McCubbin and Patterson

(1983, p. 16) depicted coping as a "bridging concept which has both cognitive and behavioral components wherein resources, perception and behavioral resources interact as families try to achieve a balance in family functioning." From these descriptions, resources are an important dimension to be investigated in the study of family coping.

Empirical research into the understanding of the role of resources in the family coping process has received limited attention. The previous section in this review notes that research has mainly focused on the stressor and the amount of crisis experienced by the family. Major contribution to the understanding of resources in the process has come from a variety of perspectives, home management, social exchange, healthy family research and practice, and family stress research. The role of resources as detailed by each of these perspectives will be briefly presented.

The Nature of Resources

Resources have been defined in a number of ways. In the home management literature resources are "what the family has or can create to get what it wants" (Paulocci, Hall & Axin, 1978, p. 136). Resources are the means available to the family for meeting demands and solving problems (Baker, 1971; Deacon & Firebaugh, 1975, 1981; Kieren, 1975; Paulocci, Hall & Axin, 1978).

Researchers from a social exchange perspective viewed resources as "anything that one partner may make available to the other, helping the latter satisfy his needs or attain his goals" (Blood & Wolfe, 1960, p. 12), or as any attribute, circumstance or possession that increases the

ability of its holders to influence a person or group (Osmond, 1978; Rodgers, 1979). Implied in this definition are the ideas of exchange and power. The definition suggests that individuals may possess not only different resources, but also individuals may possess different levels or amounts of resources.

McCubbin and Patterson (1983, p. 14) described resources as being "part of the family's capabilities for meeting demands and needs and include characteristics (a) of the individual, (b) of the family unit, and (c) of the community." Other family social scientists such as Olson et al. (1983) described family resources as those marital and family strengths which contribute to family unity and growth and development. From this perspective, family resources may perform a preventive function, in that they buffer families from many events which may result in stress.

In summary, from the variety of definitions presented, resources are the attributes, characteristics and material possessions of individual family members and/or the total family unit. The resources the individual family members or the total family unit possess have the potential to satisfy needs, to provide power to make decisions and to promote family stability and growth.

In order to more fully understand and recognize the role of resources in influencing coping it is useful to discuss various types of resources and the role of resources in coping.

Type of resources. Resources have been classified in a number of different ways: human and material; economic and non-economic; tangible and intangible; and as personal, interpersonal and material (Deacon &

Firebaugh, 1975; 1981; Kieren, 1975; Paulocci, Hall & Axin, 1977). Resources are of a variety of types, some more easily recognized than others, therefore it is difficult to identify all resources. In this review selected resources will be discussed under the headings of personal, interpersonal and material.

Personal resources are those attributes and characteristics possessed by individual family members. Included in this category are the cognitive attributes (e.g. intelligence), affective attributes (e.g. empathy), psychomotor skills, health and energy (Deacon & Firebaugh, 1981; Kieren, 1975; Paulocci, Hall & Axin, 1978). George (as cited in Olson et al., 1983) expanded upon these resources, and included such resources as financial means, education and the psychological attributes of self-esteem, feelings of a sense of control over one's life and an accurate perception of reality.

Interpersonal resources were described as those qualities which involve interaction with other individual(s) (Kieren, 1975). Kieren (1975) included in this category the resources of communications (both the ability to express oneself in thought and feelings and the ability to accurately perceive the intent of messages from other individuals), family and friends, and the ability to handle conflict effectively.

McCubbin et al.'s (1980) review of the literature identified social support and the family system's internal resources as important interpersonal resources. Social support is described as information exchanged at the interpersonal level which provided emotional, self esteem and network support. This network support may include family and friends, as well as contact with the broader community such as

clubs, and formal organizations. Family system resources were described by Burr (1973, p. 202) "as the variation in the family's ability to prevent a stressor event of change in the family social system from creating some crisis or disruptiveness in the system." The family's internal resources of adaptability and cohesiveness have received the greatest amount of attention.

Material resources refer to anything that is external to individual family members. They are the tangible goods of consumption or investment (money, clothing, time, space and other goods at one's disposal).

Deacon and Firebaugh (1981) further elaborated on the difference between human (personal and interpersonal) resources and material resources. They suggested that human resources differed from material resources in two ways. Human resources are pervasive, they are not given away in any exchange as can be the case with material resources. Human resources can also be repeatedly extended and it is possible that their positive or negative influences may increase in the process whereas material resources are limited.

Most resources which the family possesses are scarce or limited, that is, if they are used for one purpose, they are not available for use in another situation. Paulocci, Hall and Axin (1978) suggest that in one sense personal and interpersonal resources can be considered to be limited, however, individuals and total family units have the potential to maintain, create, and enhance these resources, such enhancement will increase rather than diminish their pool of resources. Deacon and Firebaugh (1975) further postulate that resources available

to the family vary over the family's life cycle. This variation is due to the differing circumstances the family encounters and to the individuality of the family members.

However defined or categorized, resources are many and varied and both individuals and groups can develop them. They are the means or the raw material which allow individuals and families to develop strategies to cope with stress or not.

Roles of Resources in Coping

Home management literature suggests that the goals which families set are directly related to the resources available. As well, the level and quality of family living can diminish without an adequate supply of resources (Baker, 1971; Deacon & Firebaugh, 1975; Paulocci, Hall & Axin, 1978).

Deacon and Firebaugh (1975) propose that the resource pool of families needs to consist of a mix of resources. A mix of resources they infer is essential for overall well being of the family. In order that an adequate combination of resources be achieved, families can exchange resources between family members and between the family and systems which are external to the family. Deacon and Firebaugh (1978) described how this exchange of resources occurs in one of two ways: mutual exchange between two or more individuals; or a one way transfer of resources, that is, one individual provides a resource without being a mutual recipient at that particular time. They further suggested that one way transfer of goods can be for either benevolent (love) or more malevolent reasons. Resources transferred for benevolent reasons

have the potential for building trust and affection within the relationship, thus serve a vital function; that of promoting integration within the family unit (Deacon & Firebaugh, 1975). One might conclude that in a climate of trust and togetherness, effective utilization of resources can occur.

Initial research in this area focused predominately on the importance of the resources of time, space, money and energy to home management. Resources in these studies were viewed as individual qualities rather than family qualities.

The role of resources has also been investigated from the social exchange perspective. Blood & Wolfe's (1960) classic study of Detroit families provided the stimulus for a large number of studies investigating family decision making and power. Blood & Wolfe (1960) examined the comparative level of resources between the marital partners and the relationship between resources and the power structure of the unit. Such a resource theory of power contends that the ability to control the behavior of others in decision making rests with the person possessing the most resources. The findings of this study showed that as the resource level of the wife increased so did her ability to participate in decision making (Blood & Wolfe, 1960). Studies by Opping (1970), Rodman (1976), and Safilos-Rothschild (1969) also supported this finding. However, studies by Rodman (1976), Olson, Cromwell & Bahr (1976) pointed out that there are other dimensions which are evident in the process when family members bargain and negotiate with one another. For example Rodman (1976) proposed that culture will influence this process. Safilos-Rothschild (1969)

further elaborated on this process including resources which were comprised of material, personal, and interpersonal resources. The salient resources identified by Salifios-Rothschild (1976, p. 356), were "(1) socioeconomic (money, social mobility and prestige); (2) affective (affection, love and feeling needed); (3) expressive (understanding, emotional support and special attention); (4) companionship (social, leisure and intelligence); (5) sex; (6) services (housekeeping services, child care, and personal services); and (7) power in the relationship." Safilios-Rothschild (1976) stated that resources would not necessarily be shared between both spouses, nor that equal value would be assigned to each resource by all spouses or by both spouses in the same family unit. The sharing of resources, it was further suggested, was dependent on a number of factors: value of the particular resource; accessibility of the particular resource; and the nature of the available resource from alternative sources (Salifios-Rothschild, 1976). The conclusions which were drawn from this work were that the more one member valued a particular resource, but lacked access to it, or alternatives through which other resources might be acquired, the greater the potential for that member to pay a high price in order to secure the resource.

Findings of this research showed that resources were exchanged between partners, either to gain personal power or have their needs met and thus indicated that partners frequently did not possess the same resources or in the same proportions. The majority of the studies on resources obtained data from one family member, the wife, and focused

on the resources of education, income, occupation and status and thus gave a limited perspective in family resource patterns.

Family stress researchers and theorists (Angell, 1936; Burr, 1973; Hill, 1958; McCubbin et al., 1976) also made reference to resources. Much of this research attempted to identify specific resources which accounted for the observed differences among families in their adaptation to experienced demands.

Angell (1936) in the study of families experiencing the great depression, identified adaptability and integration as being two very important qualities for families to possess to help them cope with the stresses they encounter. Studies of war separation by Hill (1949), and McCubbin, Dahl, Lester, Benson & Robertson (1976) supported the premise that adaptability and integration were indeed functional. Hill (1958) also identified that families who were more successful possessed the additional resources of good marital adjustment and open communication.

Burr (1973) identified several resources (which will be discussed in Chapter III) which buffered families from stress as well as resources which promoted family regeneration. Of these resources that he identified, the resources of family adaptability and integration have received the most attention from researchers.

Resources from the family stress perspective were predominantly viewed as an important mediating variable which influenced the amount of disorganization, disruption and/or incapacitation experienced by families encountering stressful life events. This research typically relied upon the responses of one family member, mainly the wife. The data obtained however was utilized as being representative of other

family member's perceptions or of the pattern for the total family unit. Generally family stress researchers have directed their attention towards understanding the events and the crisis process rather than looking carefully at individual or family resources.

Recent family literature has begun to identify factors contributing to healthy or adequate family functioning. The role of resources from this perspective, is to provide stability and promote growth. Otto (1963), a pioneer in the family and marital enrichment movement, ascertained that families have many resources, strengths and possibilities that are either latent or unused but that are present as potentials. The possession or development of these factors, may contribute to family unity and solidarity. This viewpoint implies that family resources perform a preventative role in family life, thus reducing the potential of families experiencing undue stress and/or crisis. Continuing with this approach, several researchers (Lewis et al., 1976; Olson et al., 1983; Pratt, 1976; Stinnett et al., 1979; 1980; Tanner-Nelson & Banonis, 1980), focused on identifying characteristics of strong families. Several resources were identified as being descriptors of strong or "well functioning" families such as: love, concern, commitment, close family ties, flexible role expectations, united parental unit, and clear, open communication.

Recently Olson et al.'s (1983) interest in understanding the role of resources resulted in an investigation of a variety of marital and family strengths and their impact on healthy family functioning. Resources, they stated, served two roles for families. One major role

was that of buffering or protecting families from the demands of family life. Secondly, resources facilitated family adjustment and adaptation to family life, changes. Olson et al. (1983) also reported that the resources which are beneficial to families are different over the family life cycle. During the adolescent stage, the family's internal resources, satisfaction with the spouse's personality and behavior, satisfaction with one's sexual relationship, marriage, family and friends, and financial management, emerged as critical resources for adequate family functioning. Also important are feelings of family pride and accord, satisfactory levels of parent-adolescent communication, perceptions of a satisfactory quality of life and moderate levels of adaptability and cohesion (Olson et al., 1983). These family resources assist families in meeting the demands involved in raising teenage children. They also serve to protect the family from the stress of change.

In summary, resources can be described as being those factors available to individual family members or the family as a whole for developing coping strategies which reduce tension, manage conflict and in general meet demands and needs of the family unit and individual family members. The resources which families develop, maintain or create may be many and varied. As well, the resources a family possesses change over the family's life cycle in response to the demands experienced and the development of individual family members.

The next section of the literature review will identify the role of resource consistency in coping.

Role of Resource Consistency in Coping

The previous discussion of research concerning family resources has noted the limited study of the perceptions of the whole family unit and, also, has indicated the limited attention given to the description of the different ways the family resource pool may be organized. Furthermore, we know little about the relationship between particular family patterns of resources and coping.

One way to look at family patterns has been to assess the relative levels of similarity/dissimilarity, agreement/disagreement, consistency/inconsistency between family members. In this section of the review, the key works completed in the area of consistency or agreement will be discussed.

Definition of Consistency

Many researchers from various family related fields have investigated the degree of agreement within individuals and between family members and its impact on various aspects of family life. These researchers utilized a variety of social concepts. Terms such as congruency (Imig, 1981; Douglas & Wind, 1978; Wampler & Powel, 1982; Weigel, Weigel & Richardson); spontaneous agreement (Ferreira & Winter, 1973); similarity (Rim, 1980; Medling & McCarrey, 1980); consistency (Eitzen, 1970; Hornung, 1980; Lenski, 1954, 1956; VanEs & Shingi, 1972) and consensus (Booth & Welech, 1978; Jaco & Shepard, 1975; Klapp, 1975) are found in the literature. For clarity, differentiation between these concepts needs to be made. "Consensus", as conceptualized by Klapp (1975, p. 336) "designates the sharing of acquired mental

characteristics that makes possible human types of social organization." Implied in this definition is that agreement between members is achieved through a process in which members of the group discuss, negotiate and/or compromise. Wampler and Powel (1982) in their discussion, referred to "congruency" as the degree to which one person is integrated with another person such that there is an absence of conflict or inconsistency between what exists in their awareness and behavior. Douglas and Wind (1978) in their study of "congruency" between husbands' and wives' responses referred to congruency as the degree to which family members gave identical responses independent of one another. Similarly, in Rim's (1980) study he measured the degree to which family members possessed the same qualities in various dimensions. Ferreira and Winter (1973) referred to the family characteristic of "spontaneous agreement" which was defined as a measure of the shared values and similar preferences of family members, which were independently assessed.

From the previous discussion, the concept of "consistency", seems to be more closely related to that of "congruency", "spontaneous agreement", and "similarity" than, to "consensus." These concepts, basically refer to a state of agreement, whereby individuals possess similar values, beliefs, perceptions and statuses.

Measurement of Consistency

Scheff (1967) in his discussion of agreement, suggested that agreement can be measured in two different ways: as an individual level of agreement, which is the extent to which individuals in the

group state their agreement with X or as a group level of agreement. The latter stresses the co-orientation of individuals in the group towards a statement. The first measurement is simply interested in the amount of agreement there is on the part of one individual to the statement X, whereas the co-orientation of individuals is concerned with how much agreement there is among members. Agreement can also be assessed at various levels. These two levels are perceived and actual agreement (Klein et al., 1979; Scheff, 1967). Perceived agreement is measured by comparing several family members' responses which have been stated prior to any interaction with other members. Actual agreement would be measured through interaction analysis of the family's discussion.

Several methods have been utilized to measure agreement. One method was to determine the percentage of judgments for which there was agreement between two individuals or groups of individuals. This percentage was representative of the number of items that were responded to in exactly the same way, that is all members endorsed the statement "X" (Robinson, 1967). Another option available which utilized this approach was to specify an acceptable range of agreement. The percentage of agreement was based on whether several individual's scores fell into this range. Thus, the percentage arrived at represented the number of items that were responded to within this specified range (Robinson, 1967).

A second method, involved the utilization of correlational techniques to determine the degree of agreement between two individuals, categories or groups (Robinson, 1967; Kieren, 1975;

Larsen, 1974; Jessop, 1981). Correlations, however, are a measure that deal with "the extent to which two variables are related" (Hinkle, Wiersma & Jurs, 1982), therefore correlations may be said to be an index of relationship. Robinson (1967, p. 20) stated that "agreement requires that paired values be identical, while correlations requires only that paired values be linked by a linear relationship." Correlational techniques where used to measure agreement, may therefore obscure the true nature of agreement.

Consistency Between Family Members and Coping

In the family, similar to other small groups, agreement between members has been suggested as being an important factor in achieving effective solutions to problems they encounter. A basic assumption that has permeated the family field of study is that family members develop and maintain a shared and distinctive view of their environment (Olson et al., 1983; Reiss, 1971). Other researchers such as Imig (1981), Kieren (1981) and Larsen (1982) stated that some degree of agreement between family members is necessary in order for the group to survive and thrive.

Klapp (1975) in his study, stated that the degree of consensus (agreement) experienced by a group was a critical factor affecting organization and group structure. He proposed that in groups where agreement was low, they were characterized as being less well organized in such matters as continuity of leadership and assurance that group rather than individual needs were being served. Conversely, agreement

between group members facilitated the sharing and utilization of individual resources for the betterment of all members in the group.

Ferreira and Winter (1973) proposed that in families where there are agreement between family members' perceptions of everyday issues, it will be easier for the families to cope and achieve a decision satisfactory to all members. They further concluded that the development of pathology is less likely to occur in families who hold similar views.

Imig (1981) adds support to the argument that agreement between family members facilitates families to function effectively. Imig proposed that incongruity (lack of agreement) of perceptions between spouses is potentially problematic for the couple's relationship and for effective family functioning. He concluded that when family members perceive events differently the effectiveness of communications, the utilization of resources and approaches for handling problematic situations will be diminished.

From a problem solving perspective, Klein and Hill (1979) suggested that consensus between family members and homogeneity of composition and competence, that is the ability of family members to share equally in solving problems, were important factors which facilitated effective problem solving. From this perspective, families who possessed satisfactory levels of these qualities would be characterized by shared role expectations, values, goals and sentiments towards family members and the total family unit. As well, this type of family unit would share similar definitions of events they encountered and possess similar criteria for evaluating problem solving

effectiveness. They argued that consensus (agreement) between family members and homogeneity of competence were the properties of stable, integrated family units. Thus, families in which the members possessed similar levels of resources developed stronger units. Inconsistent or discrepant family units which possessed lower levels of agreement and which were less homogenous, developed less integrated family units. This implied that high levels of agreement was important for the development of integrated family units who are effective in solving problems they encounter.

Burr (1973) in his crisis model proposed that similarity of sentiments between family members positively contributes to a family's ability to recover from a crisis. He posited that the greater the degree of similarity (agreement) between family members, the greater would be their ability to deal with the demands they encountered. The evidence, however, on the level of agreement among family members' perceptions of events is not entirely conclusive. A few other researchers investigating the degree of agreement among family members have stated conclusions which are contradictory to those mentioned previously. For example, Jessie Barnard (1972) concluded that in every marriage there were two marriages, one viewed from the husband's perspective and one viewed from the wife's perspective. Several other major studies (Kandal, 1972; Larsen, 1974; Niemi, 1968; Olson et al., 1983) provide support for this perspective that family members perceive life differently. This contradictory evidence argues for further study of the level and role of family agreement on important variables.

In summary, previous research emphasizes the important role of some level of agreement between family members and their ability to cope effectively with problems they encounter. The level of agreement for such cases is not yet understood. Some studies suggest that the amount of agreement between family members is low and that in families there are as many perceptions of family life as there are members. This suggests that very little if any agreement exists among family members. Characteristic of this research, however, is the comparison of family member's perceptions of various aspects of family life utilizing correlational techniques.

It is the purpose of this study to investigate consistency among family members and its impact on coping utilizing a measure of agreement other than correlation. Further, the distribution patterns of perceptual agreement of family systems and/or subsystems and coping has not been extensively studied. More analysis of family functioning and attitudinal resource consistency is needed. The need to focus on the family unit or a family subsystem as the unit of analysis has been supported by several researchers (Bokemeier & Munroe, 1983; Olson et al., 1983; Safilois-Rothschild, 1970; Thomson & Williams, 1982) in order to develop a greater appreciation for the complexity of family life.

CHAPTER III

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The conceptual framework for this study must detail the relationship between resources and coping. More specifically it must detail the relationship between couple and family resource consistency patterns and coping. In order to do so, this chapter will provide a brief review of stress and coping theories with particular attention directed to the impact of resources and resource consistency and coping.

Out of this discussion a rationale will be presented for the use of McCubbin et al.'s (1982) double ABCX Model as the conceptual basis for the present work. The concept of resource consistency, which is the independent variable of the present research, will be incorporated into this model.

Conceptual Approaches to Family Stress and Coping

The relationship between family stress and coping has generated a great deal of theoretical work. The majority of this research has utilized Hill's ABCX crisis model and post crisis roller coaster course of adjustment. It was not until the seventies that major attempts were made to modify Hill's model to lend clarity to the understanding of stress and coping. Major adaptations to Hill's ABCX model have been undertaken by Burr (1973) and McCubbin and Patterson (1982). A brief analysis of the three models will be presented: Hill's (1958) ABCX model, Burr's (1973) modification, and McCubbin and Patterson's (1982) double ABCX model.

Hill's ABCX Crisis Model

Hill (1958) presented the idea that families experience many problems throughout their life history and that the majority of families work out ways of solving these problems or relieving the stress associated with the problem. Hill, however, directed his attention towards understanding those families affected by serious problematic events in their lives. Thus, Hill focused on identifying the factors that contributed to families experiencing crisis. Hill's (1958) classic ABCX model provides such an explanation. Briefly it can be described as:

A (the event) → interacting with B (the family's
crisis meeting resources) → interacting with C (the
definition the family makes of the event) →
produces X (the crisis).

Hill, 1958, p. 36

The event (the A-factor) or the crisis precipitating event was described as being "a situation for which the family has had little or no prior preparation and therefore must be viewed as problematic" (Hill, 1958, p. 34). In his view, crisis precipitating events would not be the same for all families, but would vary depending upon the hardships that accompanied the event. Hardships were described as being "those complications accompanying a stressor which demand competencies from the family which the event itself may have temporarily paralyzed or made unavailable" (Hill, 1958, p. 35). Hardships were further described as being external to the family and could be considered to be attributes of the event itself. Hardship, Hill suggested, constituted a separate variable which requires separate attention.

The event (the A-factor or Crisis Precipitating event) received the greatest attention in Hill's conceptualization. Hill identified events which could be crisis provoking and classified them according to: (1) source - whether intra-family or extra-family, (2) effects upon the family configuration which combine dismemberment, accession and demoralization, and (3) type of event impinging upon the family such as sudden changes in family status and conflicts among family members.

The second variable, the family's crisis meeting resources or the B-factor was described as being "a set of resources, in family organization which by their presence or absence, kept the family from crisis or urged it on" (Hill, 1958, p. 41). This variable was not explicitly defined. Hill however identified eight family resources beneficial for families to possess: family adaptability, family integration, positive affectional relations among family members, good marital adjustment of husband and wife, companionable parent-child relationships, a family council type of decision making, social participation of the wife, and successful experiences with past stressors. Hill proposed that the family's crisis-meeting resource base was the key factor in facilitating effective response to the stressors they encountered. Hill, however did not develop this concept.

The third variable, the family's definition of the event or the C-factor, refers to the subjective definition the family assigns to the event plus the related hardships. The definition the family ascribes to the event partly reflects its value system, the experiences the

family has had with past stressors as well as the resources the family possesses which could be utilized to deal with the stressor events. Hill (1958) suggests that the family's definition of the event is an intervening variable in that for an event to be transformed into a crisis, the family must define it as being insurmountable.

Hill's definition implies that all family members view the event similarly. However, family members frequently perceive events and family life differently. Hill and Hansen (1964) further proposed the idea that in stress worn families, it would be highly improbable that family members, especially adults and children, would define the event in a similar manner. Therefore one might question whose definition of the event would determine whether or not the event was insurmountable? The definition of the event continues to be designated as an important variable in family stress research, however limited attention has been directed towards understanding this variable.

The final variable in Hill's model was crisis or the X-factor. Crisis according to Hill (1949, p. 51) was "any sharp or decisive change from which old patterns are inadequate." Concomitantly, the family defines the event an unmanageable one. Hill (1958) implicitly refers to the fact that the degree of crisis experienced by families may vary, however he did not explicitly describe how it would vary.

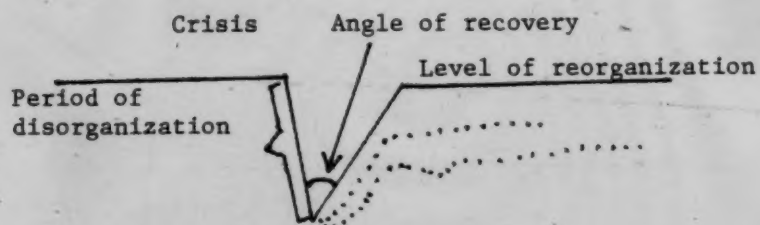
Process of Adaptation or Recovery From Crisis

Hill also described the process of adaptation or recovery from crisis which he referred to as the roller coaster profile of adjustment to crisis (see Figure 3.1). This process consisted of three phases:

disorganization, recovery and reorganization. Thus, not only did Hill acknowledge that some families experience crisis but also that some families were seen as being capable of recovering from crisis. Further to this, Hill's diagram indicates that the level of recovery may vary between families. Hill, however, did not elaborate on this process.

Figure 3.1

Hill's Roller Coaster Profile of Adjustment to Crisis



Source: Hill, 1958, p. 310

In assessing Hill's model, it is important to review how he viewed the family. He described the family as a unit of interacting personalities whose major goal was to maintain balance in the family system. Hill's model offers a partial explanation of a family's response to demands that it experiences. The possibility that families may seek change and growth rather than reequilibrium was omitted.

In summary Hill's ABCX crisis model consisted of three variables, A (the event), B (the family's crisis-meeting resources) and C (the

family's definition of the event) which contribute to the degree of crisis the family would experience.

The major strength of Hill's ABCX model was the identification of the key variables in the crisis process. These variables provided the basis for much of the subsequent research into family stress. One of the unique contributions made by Hill was the identification of the B-factor, the family's crisis meeting resources. This variable denoted the potential for the family to prevent an event from creating change or crisis. Further to this, Hill's conceptualization of the coping process suggested that families do recover from crises and are active participants in this recovery process. Hill's model further implies that families are unique, and each family will experience an event in their own way as well as experience change or crisis based on their perception of the event.

As unique and valuable as Hill's ABCX crisis model has been, there are still limitations to be considered. The major limitation of Hill's model is the lack of explicit definitions for each variable as well as any presentation of propositions related to them. Definitions provide clarity to the variables and result in a common language between scholars. Propositions, on the other hand indicate relationships and provide direction for hypotheses for subsequent research. As well, Hill's coping process is a vague and loosely described process, lacking direction as to what may specifically assist families in coping with the crisis they are experiencing.

Burr's Model

Burr's (1973) efforts were directed towards increasing the clarity and understanding of Hill's ABCX model. Burr elaborated on the variables presented in the ABCX model providing definitions and propositions to denote the relationship between various concepts and their influence on the stressor-crisis relationship. Burr's reworking of Hill's ABCX model resulted in the development of six variables and nine propositions to explain family behavior in response to stress and twelve variables and thirteen propositions describing family behavior in response to crisis.

The major constructs in Burr's conceptualization were: the stressor event, the amount of change, family vulnerability, the family's definition of the seriousness of change, the crisis and regenerative power. These variables, as well as the propositions stated by Burr, will be briefly described.

The stressor was defined as "an event that produces change in the family social system" (Burr, 1973, p. 201). Burr (1973) advocated that events vary in the amount of change they will produce as well as the amount of crisis experienced. The stressor Burr proposed was a dichotomous variable ranging from an event not causing any change to one causing an enormous amount of change. It was labelled in the same manner as Hill's A-factor. The proposition stated by Burr (1973, p. 201) that related to this variable was:

A stressor event in a family social system influences the amount of crisis in the system, and this is a positive relationship.

Family vulnerability, refers to the "variations in a family's ability to prevent a stressor change or change in a family social system from creating some crisis or disruptiveness in the system" (Burr, 1973, p. 204). It was further postulated that family vulnerability was a continuous variable, ranging from slightly vulnerable to highly vulnerable. Incorporated into this variable was Hill's concept of family crisis - meeting resources. The proposition associated with this variable was:

When a stressor event occurs, the vulnerability to stress influences the amount of influence the stressor event has on the amount of crisis and this is a positive relationship.

Burr, 1973, p. 202

Definition of the seriousness of the change refers to the family's subjective definition of whether the changes that occurred in the family's social system were easy or difficult. This definition of the seriousness of change is similar to Hill's definition of the event. Such definitions originate within the family unit. In comparison with Hill's model, Burr focused on the resulting change experienced by the family rather than the event itself. Thus the following proposition was developed (Burr, 1973, p. 202):

The definition a family makes of the severity of changes in the family social system influences the family's vulnerability to stress and this is a positive relationship.

Burr indicated that several other variables would influence family vulnerability. These variables will be presented with the propositions as stated by Burr (1973, p. 204-210):

1. Positional influence. The amount of positional influence in a social system influences the vulnerability of families to stress and this is a positive relationship.

2. Personal influence. The amount of personal influence in a social system influences the vulnerability of families to stress and this is an inverse relationship.

3. Externalization of blame. The externalization of blame for changes in the family social system influences the vulnerability of the family to stress and this is an inverse relationship.

4. Family integration. The amount of family integration influences the vulnerability to stress and this is a positive relationship.

5. Family adaptability. The amount of family adaptability influences the vulnerability to stress and this is an inverse relationship.

6. Amount of time stressful events are anticipated. The amount of time stressful events are anticipated influences the vulnerability to stress and this is an inverse relationship.

The amount of change incorporated Hill's ideas of hardships. This variable was viewed as a dichotomous variable ranging from no change to a large amount of change. Change that resulted could occur in the system's boundaries, goals, structure, processes, roles, values or in any combination of these areas. The proposition stated (Burr, 1973, p. 203) was:

The amount of change that occurs when a stressor event occurs in the family social system influences the amount of crisis that results from the event and this is a positive relationship.

Hill's X-factor or crisis was relabelled by Burr (1973) as "amount of crisis." This variable referred to "the amount of disorganization, disruption and/or incapacitation experienced by a family unit" (Burr, 1973, p. 200). In defining this variable Burr indicated that not all events will have the same impact, nor will all families respond in the same manner. Burr concluded that the variable, "amount of crisis", was

a continuous variable ranging from no crisis to a high degree of crisis. Burr (1973) further proposed that even when no crisis exists, the family may still experience stress, however the family has the ability to cope with the stress in some way.

Regenerative power refers to the ability of the family to recover from crisis. This variable implies that families vary in their ability to recover from crisis, ranging from little regenerative power to a high amount of regenerative power. Burr (1973, p. 208) stated the following proposition:

The regenerative power of families influences the level of reorganization after a period of crisis and this is a positive relationship.

Burr identified several other factors which would influence regenerative power of the family. The propositions stated (Burr, 1973, pp. 204-212) for these variables were:

1. The amount of positional influence in a social system influences the regenerative power and this is an inverse relationship.
2. The amount of personal influence in a social system influences the regenerative power and this is a positive relationship.
3. Family integration influences regenerative power and this is a positive relationship.
4. Family adaptability influences regenerative power and this is a positive relationship.
5. The amount of extended familism influences the regenerative power of families.
6. The length of time a family system experiences disruption influences the relationship in the above proposition (5) which asserts that extended familism influences the regenerative power of families and this is a quadratic relationship in which variation in short periods of time are inversely related and variation in long periods are positively related to the regenerative power.

7. The amount of similarity of sentiment in a family influences the regenerative power of families and this is a positive relationship.

8. The amount of marital adjustment influences the regenerative power of families and this is a positive relationship.

9. The amount of consultation in decision making influences the regenerative power of families and this is a positive relationship.

10. The amount of anticipatory socialization for changes in the family social system influences the regenerative power of families and this is a positive relationship.

Burr's model (see Figure 3.2) illustrates the relationship of the specified variables to one another and their influence in the stressor - amount of crisis relationship. The major strength of Burr's model was in the definition of variables and derivation of propositions relating the variables.

Further to this Burr identified specific family resources which influenced family vulnerability and regenerative power. The variables which facilitated regenerative power or coping were similarity of sentiments, marital adjustment, consultation in decision making, and anticipatory guidance. In addition, the following resources influenced both the regenerative power and vulnerability of the family, positional influence, personal influence, integration, adaptability, extended familism, and time. Thus Burr's elaboration of Hill's model gave direction to the exploration of the family's resources in the coping process.

Both Hill's model and Burr's modification of Hill's model are concerned with families that are experiencing crisis. Both clearly acknowledge that not all families experience crisis but neither

provides an explanation of how families deal with those stresses that are not defined as crisis.

Double ABCX Model

The double ABCX model was created by McCubbin & Patterson (1983) based on their belief that a more dynamic model was needed to explain the family stress process. Their model describes family adaptation to stress or crisis. Hill's ABCX model provided the foundation, however, the double ABCX model adds an additional component to each factor. The variables in the model are: factor Aa family demands: pile up, factor Bb family adaptative resources, factor Cc family definition and meaning: family adaptive coping: Interaction of Resources, Perceptions, and Behavior and factor Xx family adaptation: balancing. The following is a brief description of each variable.

Factor Aa - family demands: pile up. This variable takes into consideration the fact that seldom are families dealing with just one stressor event at any one time. Factor Aa; family demands, therefore includes the stressor, its related hardships, and prior strains which continue to plague the family. A stressor is any life event or transition in or impacting on the family unit which produces or has the potential to produce change (McCubbin et al., 1981). Hardships are those demands experienced by the family, and are a direct result of the stressor. Prior strains are those stresses and strains that have resulted from the unresolved hardships of events experienced by the family at an earlier time.

Factor Bb - family adaptive resources. Resources are the personal, interpersonal, social and material characteristics of individual family members, of the total family system, and of the community. The resources that families possess have the potential to help families meet and overcome the demands they encounter. McCubbin and Patterson (1982) concluded, that when viewed over time, there appeared to be two general types of resources: existing and expanded. Existing resources are resources the family already possess. These resources can serve two purposes, that of minimizing the effects of the stressor, and decreasing the potential of the family to experience a crisis. Expanded resources are new resources which the family system develops in response to the demands they are experiencing.

Factor Cc - family definition and meaning. Included in this variable are the family's perception of the most significant event, change or demand believed to have caused the imbalance and "C" the family's total perception of the crisis event (McCubbin et al., 1981). The "C" factor includes, the stressors, existing and newly acquired resources and estimates of what is needed to bring the family into balance. Further to this, the post crisis perception is directed toward redefining the situation into one that is manageable.

McCubbin et al. (1981) noted that this Cc factor is a family perception, and thus it involves an effort to integrate individual discrepant views into a unified whole. It is further proposed by McCubbin et al., (1981) that when the family's definition and meaning are viewed in this manner, it becomes a critical component of coping.

Family Adaptive Coping

Family coping includes the behavioral responses of family members and of the total family unit which are directed toward eliminating, managing and/or resolving the excess demands the family is experiencing. Coping also includes the acquiring, building and developing of family resources needed by the family to adapt (McCubbin et al., 1981). This variable is considered to be a bridging concept between coping, perceptions and research whether resources, perceptions and behavioral responses interact as families try to achieve a balance. Coping is not viewed as stressor specific but consists of strategies that attempt to manage various dimensions of family life simultaneously.

Factor Xx - Family Adaptation

This concept is used to describe the outcome of the family's efforts to achieve a new level of balanced family functioning following crisis (McCubbin et al., 1983). This variable is considered to be a continuous variable ranging from bonadaptation (positive end) to maladaptation (negative end). Bonadaptation results in the maintenance and strengthening of family integrity, and the promotion of individual family members as well as the total family unit (McCubbin et al., 1981). Conversely maladaptation results in "the deterioration in family integrity", "curtailment or deterioration in the personal health and development of a member or the well-being of the family unit or the loss or decline in the family independence and autonomy" (McCubbin et al., 1981).

The Operationalization of the Double ABCX Model

The application of the double ABCX model to the research problem in this study will be described briefly. This model suggests that families experience many stressors which have the potential for producing stress and/or crisis. It is a model which acknowledges the fact that seldom are families experiencing stress resulting from one stressor but that a pile up of events arise from several sources. The demands that families experience arise when there is a resource/demand imbalance. This model further intimates that families cope with the demands they encounter. The effectiveness of family coping is directly influenced by the existing resources the family has or can obtain as well as the family's perception of both the demand or Aa factor and the family resources or Bb factor. It also demonstrates that family coping results in varying degrees of adaptation - from what they term bonadaptation to maladaptation. Thus if families do not cope effectively with the demands they encounter, a crisis may result.

In summary, the major contribution of the double ABCX model is that it provides a means for looking at the family stress process as an ongoing process in everyday life, rather than just occurring during crisis. It clearly indicates that stress is ubiquitous and that all families experience stress. Resources and coping are further designated as two important qualities that families possess and they provide the potential for facilitating family resolution of the demands they experience. The authors also acknowledged that not all families achieve resolution, but may experience crisis. Resources are described as qualities of the family which over time may be developed, maintain-

ed, used and depleted. Coping is also conceptualized as a process of acquiring, building, exchanging and using resources to resist and adjust to the impact of the demands encountered. Coping as a process also is developed over time. Another contribution of McCubbin and his associates to the understanding of the stress and coping process was the followup work which resulted in the development of measurement techniques for central concepts of the model.

The particular model of stress and coping utilized for the present research is McCubbin and Pattersons' Double ABCX model. It was selected because of its emphasis on resources and for its utility in explaining the relationship between resources and coping. Such an emphasis made it possible to detail the relationship between resource consistency and coping. In addition the model was utilized in the original study which provided the data for the present secondary analysis.

In order to argue for the importance of couple and family resource consistency as an important variable in this model, one needs first to briefly describe the nature of the interactional unit called the family and next to provide a rationale for the relationship between family members' relative level of resources and their coping ability.

The Nature of the Family Unit

The nature of the family unit can be viewed in many different ways. For the purpose of this research the family will be viewed as a social system. A system is defined as "a complex of elements or

components directly or indirectly related in a causal network such that each element is related to at least some other in a more or less stable way within a particular period of time" (Buckley, 1967, p. 41). A social system is a particular kind of system based on interpersonal relationships. When viewing the family as a system, the focus is on the individual family members who are the parts of the system and the relationships between the members and between the family members and systems external to the family.

The family as a system has important properties. These properties will be briefly outlined in this section. The key properties related to the systems framework are: wholeness, interrelatedness, boundaries, patterns and organization, adaptability and stability.

The family as a system is an integrated, unified whole; more than and different from the sum of its components. As a system, the family therefore can only be understood and appreciated by a study of wholeness. This results in the important family system property of nonsummativity. This is to say that in order to gain understanding of the family, each family member as well as the relationships between family members and between the family and the external environment need to be considered (Friedman, 1981).

A boundary is a characteristic property of a family system. Boundaries may be described as the imaginary lines that exist around the system and/or subsystem. The purpose of a boundary is to delineate the parts that belong to a system and those that belong to other systems or subsystems. According to Minuchin (1974) each member belongs to a number of subsystems, but within the family three major

subsystems are usually identified: the spousal subsystem (which provides the adult architects of the family with a setting for mutual, supportive interaction and socialization), the parental subsystem (which arises with the birth of the first child and is thus a transformation of the spousal subsystem) and the sibling subsystem. It can be further stated that the boundaries developed by the family system influences the composition of the subsystems. To clarify, the boundary of the family system links together family members, their expectations and their beliefs.

Like all systems, the family is comprised of interrelated and interdependent components. These properties of the family are such that when change in one family member occurs, this tends to promote change in other members to some extent and further to this it can create change in the whole family system (Montgomery, 1981; Hill, 1972; Broderick & Smith, 1979). However the degree of interdependency of the persons within the family system varies over the life cycle as well as between families.

The family as a system develops discernable patterns and form. Patterns are the observable properties of a system. The patterns that form in families develop as a result of the interaction that occurs within the family. Family patterns therefore are "its accepted and expected ways of behaving" (Montgomery, 1981, p. 17). The patterns of each family unit will be unique for each family. Fawcett (1975) further proposes that patterns are never complete but are dynamic therefore ever changing. Mutual interaction between family members, promotes changes in the pattern (Hess & Handel, 1967).

The family is a stability seeking and adaptive system. The family as a system is subjected to numerous disturbances from within the family unit as well as from outside. The family therefore must develop a way to handle these various disturbances in order that the family unit remains viable. The viability of the family system depends on the ability of the family to achieve a balance between morphogenic (that of evolving a new structure and organization) and morphostatic (self correcting) processes. The balance of these two processes can facilitate families to move to a different level of functioning and to achieve stability until the necessity to change occurs again.

The Principle of Consistency

The theoretical work previously reviewed has identified two issues, the central role of resources in the coping process and the mediating function of perception in reducing the impact of stressful life events. If one then, views the family as a system with system properties it follows that family members' perceptions also are interrelated and may form consistent or inconsistent patterns. Theoretical formulations do not deal with family perception sufficiently. At the family level, the source of perception is not always clear (McCubbin et al., 1980). Once one asks about the source, this leads to determining (1) each individual family member's perceptions, (2) how similar or different their perceptions are, and (3) how the family members' perceptions arrange themselves in a family.

An argument can be made for the power of consistency on agreement of family members' perception of family resources, in that less energy

and effort would be required by the family to define various aspects of the situation and their coping ability. Thus it is proposed that consistency in itself is an intervening variable in the stress and coping process. In addition a shared perception of being highly resourceful contributes to the view that difficult situations can be handled.

We know little about how family members' perceptions of resources are distributed in families and less is known about how certain family patterns may be related to coping. The questions that arise are: if there is a family collective pattern of perception of resources, then what does it look like? Is consistency of perception important for all family members, the parents only or can parent-child coalitions also be facilitating? This study proposes that consistency patterns of family members on resources is essential to investigate in order to refine the role which resources play in the stress-coping process.

The properties of the family which have been presented reflect the nature of the family unit as a social system and provides the basis for the principle of resource consistency. Within the family system it is possible to determine the level of agreement between two or more family members' perception of various important aspects of family life such as resources. Such determination makes it possible to describe the consistency pattern (absolute or within a range) of these variables. The principle of consistency (agreement within a range) is the term which characterizes the pattern or distribution of variables within a system.

There is no strong evidence in the previous literature that complete agreement between family members is necessary for resolution of demands experienced by families. The implications of some research (Burr, 1973; Klein et al., 1979; Ferreira et al., 1973; Imig, 1981, Reiss, 1980) is suggestive that some degree of agreement contributes to coping. Hess and Handel (1967) postulated that a family system, harmonious relationships are sought and that when family members develop compatible images of self, of other family members and of the whole family unit, continuity of the family system is promoted. They further stated that to expect family members to view family life in exactly the same way would be unrealistic. Therefore, harmonious relationships would not be interpreted as being relationships based on identical values, beliefs and perceptions. It might further be postulated that in families where family members' perceptions are consistent on important resource variables, energy could be directed towards growth rather than maintenance activities. On the other hand, in families where the family members perceive resources very discrepantly (low degree of consistency) more energy may be needed for maintenance of the relationship (achieving some level of agreement) rather than growth activities. Thus their level of functioning would be less adequate.

Based on the previous principle of resource consistency, it would be expected that those couples and families who have more than one member who perceives their resource level as being high on important variables would be able to cope better than couples and families who have one or more members who perceive their resource level as being low

on important variables. Further, families with two or more members with similar high levels of a resource minimize the potential of having to direct their energies towards having to bring other members up to their level.

The importance of a strong parental coalition has been repeatedly emphasized as being important to healthy family functioning (Barnhill, 1979; Lewis et al., 1976; Olson et al., 1983; Otto, 1963). In family groups, parental consistency on important resources may be an important variation to scrutinize carefully.

Summary

In summary, the family as a system encounters many stressful events from a variety of sources, some resulting as a consequence of change within the system others from changes in the external environment. The family as a unit responds to the stress of change by attempting to gain stability. It has been suggested that families who have developed consistent, mutually satisfying relationships will cope more effectively. Resources have been shown to have an important function in the stress and coping process. The role which resource consistency (agreement within a range) has in promoting adequate family functioning is illustrated by the following general and specific propositions:

1. The perceived resource consistency patterns of two or more family members will have an effect on family coping.

- a) Couples who are consistent on the high level of important resources will have higher coping scores than will do those who form a

discrepant pattern or a low-low pattern.

b) Families who form a high-high-high consistency pattern on important resources will have higher coping scores than do those who form a low-low-low consistency pattern.

c) Families in which the parents are high-high in important resources will cope better than will families in which the consistency occurs between parent and adolescent because of the importance of the marital unit.

Hypothesis for this Study

The null hypotheses to be listed in this study are:

Couple Level

1. The Mean Coping scores for each couple resource consistency group on each specific resource variable are equal.
2. The discrepancy coping scores for each couple resource consistency group on each specific resource variable are equal.

Family Level

1. The mean coping score for each family resource consistency group on each specific resource variable are equal.
2. The discrepancy coping score for each family resource consistency group in each specific resource variable are equal.

CHAPTER IV

RESEARCH METHODS

7. The research design will be presented in this chapter. Because secondary analysis is the technique being used, initially a brief review of the research design of the original study will be described (Olson et al., 1983). Following that, a detailed discussion of the sample, instrumentation, and data analysis specific to this secondary analysis will be described. Permission was granted by the original researchers and the funding organization, which was an insurance company, to utilize the data.

The Original Study

The data was collected in a study of family health of a group of over one thousand American families at various stages of the life cycle. All participants were policy holders of the insurance company initiating the study. The focus of this study was to identify "healthy family systems in order to learn how they have effectively dealt with the stress that occurs during their critical transition periods" and also to identify "the types of resources and support systems that families use to cope with their problems" (Olson et al., 1982, p. 2).

The Sample and Sampling Procedure

Individuals, couples and families were the units of analysis in the original study. Since the study was designed to explore and describe the nature of couple and family stress and coping ability

throughout the life cycle, a stratified random sample of policy holders at each life cycle stage was employed. In order for a couple or family to qualify, the individuals had to be members of intact units and capable and willing to complete all the necessary forms.

The company contracting this research provided assistance in identifying the sampling units, arriving at the stratified random sample and collecting the data. The company had at its disposal the services of leaders who were located throughout the United States. The first step in drawing the sample was to identify group leaders who were associated with the company in various centers across the entire United States who would be willing to collect data.

Once group leaders were identified, an initial list of policy holders in each leader's district was identified. Each family in this list was tentatively placed in a particular family life cycle stage on the basis of the husband's and wife's ages or by the age of the oldest child. A random selection of participant families was made with backups to allow for representation at all stages of the life cycle. In order to achieve the desired sample size, "it was decided by the primary researchers to over sample by at least 50%" (Olson et al., 1983, p. 18). Some life cycle stages, such as the young couple, families with young adults, families in the middle years, and retired families were intentionally over sampled in proportion to other stages to assure sufficient representation (Olson et al., 1982). Each group leader was asked to collect information from 15 randomly selected couples or families distributed over the life cycle as follows: two young couples, one childbearing, one preschool, one school age, two

adolescent, four young adults, two middle years, and two retirement. A total of 2,700 families were randomly selected.

The final sample consisted of 1,140 couples and 412 adolescents of which 1,024 returned fully completed forms. The final distribution of the sample as described by Olson, McCubbin and associates (1982, p. 23) is presented in Table 4.1.

Comparison with the National Gallop Survey

The Gallop organization, in December 1981, conducted a national survey to assess satisfaction with quality of life. The results were published in January, 1981. The Gallop survey was based on personal interviews with 1,483 adults.

The Gallop survey, according to Olson et al. (1983) asked some of the same types of questions as their survey had asked. For example, the Gallop survey asked, "Considering everything, how satisfied are you with your ... family life, marriage, relations with your children, housing, health, job and housework?" (Olson et al., 1983, p. 24). The Olson et al. (1983) study asked, "How satisfied are you with your ... family, marriage, children current housing arrangement, own health, principal occupation, and household responsibilities?" (p. 24). Because of the similarity of many of the questions, it was possible to compare the two groups. The results from these two surveys were very similar, suggesting to Olson and associates that their sample was more representative of American families than would be suggested by the population from which it was drawn.

Table 4.1

Sample by Stage - Original Study

<u>Stages of the Family Life Cycle</u>	<u>Couples</u>	<u>Adolescents</u>	<u>Total Individuals</u>
Stage 1 <u>Young Couples Without Children</u>	121	N.A.	242
Stage 2 <u>Families with Pre- Schoolers (ages 0-5)</u>	148	N.A.	296
Stage 3 <u>Families with School Age Children (Ages 6-12)</u>	129	N.A.	258
Stage 4 <u>Families with Adolescents (Ages 13-18)</u>	261	350	872
Stage 5 <u>Launching Families (First Adolescent 19)</u>	191	62	444
Stage 6 <u>Empty Nest Families (All Children Gone)</u>	144	N.A.	288
Stage 7 <u>Retired Couples (Male over 65)</u>	146	N.A.	292
	—	—	—
TOTALS	1,140	412	2,692

Because the particular focus of this secondary analysis was stage 4 it will be described in detail.

Demographic Characteristics: Stage Four Adolescent Stage

Marital status. Couples at stage four had been married an average of nineteen years. The range was 5-39 years. The majority of these couples were in their first marriage. Less than 10% of the total sample reported ever having been married before (Olson et al., 1982). Divorce or separation had been considered by 17% of the wives and 15% of the husbands at some point in their marriage.

Age composition. The age of the parent sample at stage 4 ranged from 31-57 years, the average being 41 years. More specifically the husbands' average age was 43 years and the wives' 40. The average age of the adolescent sample was 16 years.

Residence. Families resided in a variety of settings. The largest group (25%) lived in metropolitan areas exceeding a population of 100,000. The remainder of the families were fairly evenly distributed between large towns (18%), small towns (14%), rural areas (14%), farms (13%).

Education, occupation and employment. Only 3% of the husbands and 2% of the wives, had less than a high school diploma, while 32% of the husbands and 19% of the wives reported having completed four or more years of college.

The wives reported working at a variety of occupations. The three primary occupations cited were homemaking (35%), other professions¹ (22%), and sales, technical and clerical occupations (17%).

The husbands most frequently cited occupation was a professional position (14% professional and 29% other professions). The next occupation most frequently cited was skilled trades (12%), and sales, technical and clerical positions (11.5%). The major employment status for the husbands was full time employment (73%) followed next by full time and part time combined (12%).

¹Other profession - referred to managers, teachers, nurses whereas professionals included doctors, lawyers, and executives.

Income. The modal income for families in stage 4, was between \$20,000-29,999, with 29% of the sample achieving this level of income. The next largest category was \$30,000-39,999 in which 17% of the sample was located.

Data Collection

A leader administered questionnaire was utilized to collect the data. The group leaders collected the data in a series of group meetings. Family members each completed questionnaires independently at these meetings. Phase I involved the use of one group of leaders. Phase II was initiated when response rates fell below that expected, and a set of new leaders were utilized. Leaders were provided with research packets which included instructions on how to work with the families, and how to organize meetings to collect the data. When the response rate of only 51% per leader was obtained for Phase I, a second phase of data collection was initiated. This second phase of the data collection was organized by the research team rather than the contracting company and the response rate obtained was higher (59%). There was a high percentage of families in both phases (I=49% and II=40%) that did not participate in the study for some reason (Olson et al., 1982). In total, some data was obtained from 43% of the sampled families. It was particularly difficult to obtain data from families in which the father, mother and adolescent were asked to complete questionnaires (stage 4). The number of families at the adolescent stage which completed questionnaires was 261. The present research is focused on this group. Phase I data collection occurred during the

time period June 1981 to November 1981 and Phase II began in November 1981 and was completed by January 1982.

Instrumentation

A fixed answer questionnaire consisting of 15 scales plus a demographic section was utilized to collect the data. Scales were developed by the original research team to measure marital and family dynamics applicable to both husbands and wives, therefore the same form was completed by both. For family level variables an adolescent form was also developed by the original researchers. The scales were extensively pretested in order to ensure reliability and validity (Olson et al., 1983). This occurred in the early stages of the original study. The scales were reported in detail in the monograph entitled Family Inventories: Inventories used in a National Survey of Families Across the Family Life Cycle (1982). The monograph describes the development of each instrument, the reliability (internal consistency and test-retest), validity, scoring procedures and norms for the various scales.

The Secondary Analysis

The Sample

Families at the adolescent stage of the family life cycle constituted the sample for this study. In order for the family to qualify, the following criteria were utilized: family membership must contain an adolescent between the age of thirteen to eighteen and a

husband and wife; and individual family members must have completed the appropriate measures of each specified resource investigated. Two levels of analysis were utilized in this study, the couple (consisting of husband and wife) and the family (consisting of husband, wife and adolescent). For the couple level of analysis, completed forms related to marital satisfaction, satisfaction with personality issue, satisfaction with sexual relationships, satisfaction with family and friends, and satisfaction with financial management had to be available from both members. In addition the family, consisting of the husband, wife and the adolescent had to have completed the following questionnaires: Family Satisfaction and Quality of Life.

The sample in this analysis for the couple level of analysis consisted of 201 couples and at the family level of analysis consisted of 138 families. In this study because of the criteria imposed, the sample size was smaller than that used by Olson et al. (1983). The extensive analysis done at the various levels (individual, couple and family) in the original study allowed family members' responses to be retained even when some of the items on the questionnaires were not completed.

Selection of Variables

Independent variables. The independent variables in the present analysis are couple resource consistency patterns and family resource consistency patterns. Resource consistency in this study refers to the level of agreement of two or more family members regarding their individual assessment of a specific resource. In order to arrive at

couple and family resource consistency scores, key couple and family resources had to be identified. Criteria for selection of variables was based on the definition of family resources utilized by Olson et al. (1982) as well as the findings of that study with respect to key resources across the life cycle.

In the original study, family resources were defined as those "marital and family strengths which help them cope more effectively with the stresses they encounter" (Olson et al., 1983, p. 19). Strengths were viewed as a "smaller constellation of attributes encompassed in the larger term resources" (Olson et al., 1983, p. 95). The results of the Olson study (1983) contrasted the level of selected couple and family strengths (resources) over the life cycle at each stage. During the adolescent stage of the family life cycle sixteen family resources appeared to facilitate positive family adjustment. The sixteen resources identified fell into these areas: "positive appraisal of their quality of life, marital and family strengths, communication, supportive network of valued friends and relatives, leisure activities, strong health practices and satisfaction with children" (Olson et al., 1983, p. 210). Of these sixteen resources, six were described by Olson et al. (1983) as essential. Five of these were resources assessed at the couple level, whereas one was assessed at the family level. The five couple level resources were: family satisfaction with its financial management, liked the personality of their spouse, enjoyed their extended family and friends, the couple had a good sexual relationship and were happy with their marriage. The one

family level resource identified was the family's overall happiness with its quality of life.

The five couple level resources identified in the original study were ones which only the husband and wife provided data. For the family level resources all three members (mother, father and adolescent) had been required to complete the appropriate scales.

Based on the original study findings, the resources which were selected to create the independent variable of resource consistency at the couple level of analysis were: marital satisfaction, satisfaction with personality and behavior of spouse, satisfaction with sexual relationship, satisfaction with financial management, and satisfaction with family and friends. The resource variables selected for the creation of the independent variable resource consistency at the family level of analysis were: satisfaction with quality of life, and assessment of family strength. Family strength were added because of Olson's et al. (1983) argument that this scale was designated to measure the constillation of attributes that are part of the family systems internal resources. This scale measured group characteristics rather than individual or marital characteristics. Family strength, therefore, was designed to assess family level resources just as ENRICH was designed to measure couple level resources.

Dependent Variable

The dependent variable in this study was couple and family coping. Coping in this study refers to the complex process which involves

efforts taken by individual family members or the total family unit to manage the stressors encountered.

Based on the original study, the F-COPES scale, which asked family members to identify the efforts (strategies) they would utilize in response to stressors they encounter, was selected to measure couple and family coping.

Measurement of Independent Variables

Couple Level

Once the resources were identified a resource consistency score was obtained for each couple on each variable. Two categories were formed, resource consistent or inconsistent. To arrive at this classification, the frequency distribution describing the scores achieved by all the husbands and all the wives on each resource was reviewed. The means for each group on each resource were utilized as the cutting points for recoding the husband's and wife's score into high or low. To determine couple resource consistency patterns, husbands and wives scores were plotted against each other to form a 2x2 table. Four possible groups were determined: (see Table 4.1): (1) Couple resource consistent - high (resource scores of both members on a particular variable were above the mean), (2) Couple resource inconsistent - husband high (husband's resource score was above the mean and wife's score was below the mean), (3) Couple resource inconsistent - wife high (husband's resource score was below the mean and wife's resource score was above the mean), (4) Couple resource

consistent - low (resource scores of both members on a particular variable were below the mean).

Figure 4.1

Couple Resource Consistency Patterns

		Wife	
		Level of Resource	
Level of Resources	Husband	High	Low
		Resource Consistent (HH)	Resource Inconsistent (HL)
	Low	Resource Inconsistent (LH)	Resource Consistent (LL)

Family Level

A similar procedure was followed for determining the family's resource consistency patterns. Frequency distributions were reviewed for all three groups, mothers, fathers and adolescents. The mean of each group for each resource was utilized as the cutting point for recoding mother's, father's and adolescent's score as high or low on a resource. Utilizing the mean as the cutting point results in the creation of eight possible family resource consistency patterns, two of these types of consistent patterns and six types of inconsistent patterns. The two resource consistent patterns are:

- (1) Family resource consistent - high (all family members scored above the mean on a particular variable).
- (2) Family resource consistent -

low (all family members scored below the mean on a particular variable).

The six resource inconsistent patterns consist of two types of parent-parent coalitions and four types of parent-child coalitions. The parent coalition types are: (1) Family resource inconsistent - parents high (parents both scored above the mean, the adolescent scored below the mean). (2) Family resource inconsistent - parents low (parents both scored below the mean, the adolescent scored above the mean). The four parent-child coalition types are: (1) Family resource inconsistent - father-adolescent high (father and adolescent scored above the mean and mother scored below the mean). (2) Family resource inconsistent - father-adolescent low (father and adolescent scored below the mean, and mother scored above the mean). (3) Family resource inconsistent - mother-adolescent high (mother and adolescent scored above the mean and father scored below the mean). (4) Family resource inconsistent - mother-adolescent low (mother and adolescent scored below the mean and father scored above the mean).

Measurement of Dependent Variable

The dependent variable for this study, coping was measured by couple and family mean scores and couple and family discrepancy scores obtained from the F-COPES scale. The F-COPES scale asks individuals to identify the types of strategies they would utilize in response to stressors they encounter. This will be described in more detail in a subsequent section.

Figure 4.2

Family Resource Consistency Patterns

Consistent Patterns

Family Resource
Consistent-High
(Mother, Father,
Adolescent-High)

Family Resource
Consistent-Low
(Mother, Father,
Adolescent-Low)

Inconsistent Patterns

Parent Coalitions

Family Resource
Inconsistent
(Both Parents-
High, Adolescent-
Low)

Family Resource
Inconsistent
(Both Parents-
Low, Adolescent-
High)

Parent-Adolescent
Coalitions

Family Resource
Inconsistent
(Father and
Adolescent-High
Mother-Low)

Family Resource
Inconsistent
(Father and
Adolescent-Low,
Mother-High)

Family Resource
Inconsistent
(Mother and
Adolescent-High
Father-Low)

Family Resource
Inconsistent
(Mother and
Adolescent-Low
Father-High)

Instrumentation for Resource Variables: Couple¹

Enrich. The Enriching and Nurturing Relationship Issues, Communications and Happiness (ENRICH) scales was developed by Olson, Fournic and Druckman (1981). This scale describes marital dynamics for research, however it can also be utilized as a diagnostic tool for couples seeking counselling or enrichment. This scale consisted of 12 subscales containing 125 items reflecting the salient content areas pertaining to marriage. From this scale five subscales were utilized for the present work.

1. Marital satisfaction. This subscale provides a global measure of a spouse's perception of satisfaction in the couple's marriage. The areas of the marital relationship assessed include the major categories in ENRICH: personality characteristics, role responsibility, communication, conflict resolution, financial concerns, parental responsibilities, relationships with family and friends, and religious orientation. This subscale consisted of ten items. High scores are an indication of compatibility and satisfaction with the various aspects of the couple's marital relationship. The alpha reliability for this subscale is .81.

2. Personality issues. This subscale contains 12 Likert-type items which assess the individual's perception of satisfaction or dissatisfaction with their spouse's personality and behavior. Some examples of behaviors measured in this subscale are: temper, tardiness, jealousy, and public demonstration of affection. High

¹ All scales utilized in this secondary analysis are reported in Appendix A.

scores indicate adjustment to one's spouse's behavior. The alpha reliability for this subscale is .73.

3. Financial management. The purpose of this 10 item Likert subscale is to assess the attitudes and concerns related to the way economic issues are managed within the family relationship. High scores indicate satisfaction with the way finances are managed and that there is a realistic approach towards financial matters. The alpha reliability for this scale is .74.

4. Sexual relationship. This subscale consists of ten items designed to measure an individual's feelings and concerns about the affectional and sexual relationships with one's partner. Several aspects of this relationship are assessed. For example, satisfaction with expression of affection, level of comfort with attitudes, behavior and ability to discuss sexual issues, decisions related to birth control and concerns related to sexual fidelity. High scores indicate satisfaction with the way affection is expressed and a positive attitude towards the role of sexuality in the marriage. The alpha reliability for this scale is .48.

5. Family and friends. This ten item subscale assesses the feelings and concerns about the relationships with relatives, inlaws and friends. Items specifically assess the impact family and friends have on the marriage, satisfaction with the amount of time spent with the family and friends, involvement of partner with family and friends; and comfort felt in the presence of each other's family and friends. High scores reflect satisfaction with the relationships with family, friends and inlaws. The alpha reliability for this subscale is .72.

Instrumentation for Resource Variables: Family²

The scales utilized for this study will be described briefly as they are reported elsewhere in detail (Olson et al., 1982).

Family Strength. The Family Strength scale (Olson, Larsen & McCubbin, 1982) consists of two subscales containing 12 items which require the respondents to select answers on a Likert-type scale. The selection of items was guided by the recent definition of family strengths as being a small group of attributes which consist of family worthiness and competence and results of factor analyses. Family worthiness includes such aspects as trust, loyalty and respect for one's family. Seven items reflect this dimension under the subscale of Pride. Family competence assesses the ability of the family group to handle problematic events. Five items reflected this aspect under the subscale of Accord.

Cronbach's alpha was completed for each item separately and then for the total scale. The overall alpha reliability is .83. The alpha reliability for the subscale Pride was .88 and .72 for Accord. The total possible sum score for the Family Strength scale is 60 which indicated that there was a strong positive orientation towards the family.

²Copies of the scales utilized in this analysis are presented in Appendix A.

Quality of Life. Two different Quality of Life forms - one for parents and another for the adolescent child were developed by Olson and Barnes (1982). These evaluated each individual's satisfaction with various aspects of their life. The parents' form contained forty Likert-type items in 12 categories: marriage and family life, friends, extended family, health, home, education, time, religion, employment, mass media, financial well being, and neighborhood and community. The adolescent's form contained 25 Likert-type items in 11 categories, which were generally similar to the parents' form. In the Adolescent form employment was omitted, time was classified as leisure, and marriage and family were modified to focus on family only. Many of the specific questions were worded differently to reflect the concerns of each group. However, nineteen items were common to both scales.

The alpha reliability is .92 for the parents' scale and .86 for the adolescents scale. A total unweighted sum score was used for both the total scale and the subscales. Higher scores on these scales indicated a higher level of perceived satisfaction.

Instrumentation: Dependent Variable

F-COPES (Family Coping Strategies). F-Copes developed by McCubbin, Larsen and Olsen (1982) contains 29 Likert-type items which reflect five types of internal and external coping strategies families may use to deal with stressful events they encounter. The five types of strategies are: reframing, acquiring social support, seeking spiritual support, mobilizing the family to acquire and accept help and passive appraisal.

The alpha reliability for the overall scale is .86. High scores indicate that the family is utilizing effective coping strategies in response to problems and difficulties they encounter.

Data Analysis

Secondary Analysis

In this research secondary analysis of data was utilized as the primary research technique. Secondary analysis of data may be defined as the "extraction of knowledge in topics other than those which were the focus of the original survey" (Hyman, 1972, p. 1). Current financial deficiencies for social science research makes this an attractive method of utilizing data more fully. There are several advantages for doing secondary analysis: economizing on time, money, and personnel. This is especially true due to the vast amount of time, money and personnel needed to collect data. It is generally considered that approximately 40% of one's budget is allocated for the data collection phase. The second benefit is related to the fact that the data is collected without any "intrusion and exacerbation of social conflict" (Hyman, 1972, p. 8). Another benefit lies in the fact that it prevents the same people from being surveyed repeatedly for several different projects. Lastly it allows a single researcher the opportunity to utilize nation-wide data.

Secondary analysis, has its own limitations. Secondary analyses are always limited by the nature and quality of the original design and the data that was collected. The primary data may impose constraints

upon the way the present researcher may approach a particular problem (Li, 1981, p. 107).

In conducting secondary analysis, the researcher needs to make sure that the data is compatible with the new research questions being posed. The researcher also needs to know exactly how the data was collected. Li (1981) suggests that the documents needed for secondary analysis of survey data are: a technical report of the design, a code book, copies of the questionnaire(s), and the data set.

Secondary analysis has been chosen as the means of approach in this research primarily for four reasons:

1. Secondary analysis, provided the opportunity to work with a nation-wide survey that had obtained data from a large sample.
2. Secondary analysis of a data set with a sample of several family members allowed for the use of the couple and the family as a unit of analysis.
3. Secondary analysis allowed for further exploration of questions related to family resources which were only partially answered in the original study.
4. Secondary analysis was more economical than primary research in relation to time, money and personnel.

Level of Analysis

An important issue confronting family researchers is the need to develop and utilize strategies which adequately describe the complexity of family life. Collecting data from more than one family member has been one strategy and is helpful in illustrating family complexity.

When such data is collected the next step is the development of a method which combines the results from multiple family members thus facilitating analysis at the couple and family level (Thomson & Williams, 1982). Olson and associates (1982, p. 164) suggest that "the development of family and couple scores can be compared to dealing with a double edged sword, in that family and couple scores need to be a concise measure that will cut through the complexity of the marital and family system, without destroying the individual components that make up the family system."

Several statistical techniques have been utilized to analyze data at the couple and family levels, for example, means, discrepancies, correlations, and regressions (Kieren, 1983; Glenn & Weaver, 1981; Tiggle, Peters, Kelley & Vincent, 1982). Researchers such as Moos and Moos (1976) and Olson and associates (1982) combined family member's scores to develop family typologies which classify and describe couples and families rather than variables. As well Olson and associates in their recent study (1982) utilized several techniques to analyze data at the couple and family level: couple mean scores; couple discrepancy scores, family mean scores, family distance scores and family mean z scores.

Couple Scores

Couple scores present the opportunity to combine individual perceptions to form a measure of the couple as a unit (Olson et al., 1982, p. 164). For this study, couple mean scores and couple discrepancy scores will be utilized.

Couple mean scores (husband's score plus wife's score/2) summarizes the characteristics of the couple. The mean score however eliminates individual differences as well as the extent to which each individual within the relationship differs from one another. Olson and associates (1983) suggest that the couple mean may be appropriate even when it masks the individual differences between the couple. "Because the couple mean score falls between the individual scores of the spouses, it may more accurately reflect the behavior of the couple as a unit" (Olson et al., 1983, p. 272). As a unit, they propose that when there is wide discrepancy between the couple's perception, the overall assessment of the couple would be expected to demonstrate a compromise somewhere between the individual positions (Olson et al., 1983).

Couple discrepancy scores (husband's score minus wife's score or vice versa, and changing the score to an absolute value) represents the amount of difference that exists between the perceptions of husband and wife (Olson, et al., 1982). The couple discrepancy score identifies and highlights the difference between the husband and wife and thus measures the degree of intercouple agreement.

The couple mean and the couple discrepancy scores measure different aspects of the marital relationship. Olson and associates (1982) suggest that using both of these scores overcomes the limitation of the other. Couple mean scores provide a position for the couple on a scale, however, they conceal the individual differences between the couple. On the other hand, discrepancy scores emphasize the individual differences between a husband and wife. Therefore, because of the complementary nature of these two scores, utilizing both scores in the

same analysis will minimize the loss of data and maximize the information obtained (Olson et al., 1983). In summary, the couple mean score provides a description of the couple as a unit, while at the same time the discrepancy score provides a measure of inter couple agreement (Olson et al., 1983).

Family Scores

Because of the need to increase our understanding of the family as a system, several scoring techniques were identified by Olson et al. (1983) as appropriate for use at the family level of analysis, family mean scores, family distance scores and the family mean z. They further suggested that the family mean score was conceptually equal to the couple mean score and the family distance score was equal to the couple discrepancy score. The family mean z score was not described but was suggested for variables in which parent adolescent norms were different (Olson et al., 1983, p. 279).

For this study family mean scores and family discrepancy scores were utilized. Calculation of these scores is similar to the calculation of couple mean and discrepancy scores.

Method of Analysis

Research Question One:

Question one posed in Chapter I asked "what is the nature of consistency patterns on selected resources for couples at the

adolescent stage of the family life cycle?" For this question a hypothesis was not stated.

A frequency distribution for each selected resource was reviewed to determine the resource consistency pattern for this sample at the couple level. A Chi Square Goodness of Fit test was utilized to determine whether the observed distribution differed from chance.

In addition a McNemar test (Siegel, 1956) was used to test for significant differences in the proportion of the sample in each resource consistency group for each selected resource.

Research Question Two:

Question two as stated in Chapter I asked "What is the nature of resource consistency patterns on selected resources for families at the adolescent stage of the family life cycle?" A hypothesis was not stated for this question.

Frequency distributions for each selected resource was reviewed to determine the resource consistency pattern for this sample at the family level. Again a Chi Square Goodness of Fit test was utilized to determine whether the observed distribution differed from chance. Following this, the McNemar test (Siegel, 1956) was performed to detect any significant differences between the proportion of subjects identified in each resource consistency group.

Research Question Three:

Question three posed in Chapter I asked "what is the relationship between the particular couple resource consistency pattern for selected

couple resources and the couples' coping score?" For this question the general hypothesis was that the mean coping scores in each couple resource consistency group were equal.

One Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) and the Scheffe test were the statistical techniques utilized to determine the relationship between the independent variables and the dependent variable. Analysis of Variance is "a statistical technique that assesses the effect of one or more categorical independent variables, measured at any level upon a continuous dependent variable that is usually assumed to be measured at an interval level" (Nie et al., 1975, p. 9). It is used to test the significant differences between the means of a number of different groups (Hinkle, Wiersma & Jurs, 1970).

Research Question Four:

Question four asked "What is the relationship between the particular family resource consistency pattern on selected family resources and the family coping score?" The general hypothesis stated for this question was that the mean coping scores in all family resource consistency groups were equal.

This question was approached in the same way as question 3. One way Analysis of Variance and the Scheffe test were the statistical techniques utilized. A significance level of $<.05$ was established for all statistical tests.

CHAPTER V

RESULTS

This chapter describes the demographic characteristics of the sample utilized for the secondary analysis. In addition, it reports the results of the tests of each of the eight hypotheses derived to answer the research questions outlined in Chapter III. A discussion of the results pertinent to each research question and any relevant hypotheses follows each section.

Description of the Sample

The study sample consisted of 201 couples and 138 three person families at the adolescent stage who met the criteria for inclusion reported in Chapter IV. Because the data were to be analyzed at two levels - couple and family, sixty-three more husbands and wives were included even though their adolescent son or daughter did not have complete data for the family level of analysis. This was slightly lower than the number included in the Olson et al. (1983) analysis in that only couples and families with complete data on the selected variables were included in the present analysis.

Couples in this study had been married on the average of 18.6 years, the range was 5 to 39 years. This was the first marriage for 85.5% of husbands and 82.6% of the wives in the sample. The age of the parents in the sample ranged from 31 to 57 years of age, the mean being 41 years. The age of the adolescents in this sample ranged from 13 years to 18 with the mean being 16 years.

The parents in this sample were relatively well educated. A high school diploma or better was achieved by 97.6% of the wives and 96.1% of the husbands. A variety of occupations were held by both the husbands and wives in this study. For example, thirty-five percent of the wives were homemakers, twenty percent were in professional occupations and eighteen percent were in sales, technical and clerical employment. Of the wives employed outside of the home, 31% were employed full time and 26% part time. Husbands also were employed in a variety of occupations, with 42% employed in professional positions. Full time employment characterized the largest percentage of husbands. The modal income group for the families in this sample was between \$20,000-\$29,999 with 29% of the group achieving this level.

Comparing these demographic characteristics with those reported by Olson in his original study of families at the adolescent stage (1983, pp. 21-34), the sample of the present study does not differ substantially.

The Research Questions

The presentation of the results will summarize the data relevant to each research question.

Question One. General question. What is the nature of resource consistency patterns on selected resources for couples at the adolescent stage of the family life cycle?

Specific questions:

(a) What is the nature of the resource consistency pattern for marital satisfaction for couples at the adolescent stage of the family cycle?

(b) What is the nature of resource consistency patterns for satisfaction with personality issues and behavior of one's spouse for couples at the adolescent stage of the family life cycle?

(c) What is the nature of the resource consistency patterns for satisfaction with the sexual relationship for couples at the adolescent stage of the family life cycle?

(d) What is the nature of resource consistency patterns for satisfaction with family and friends for couples at the adolescent stage of the family life cycle?

(e) What is the nature of resource consistency patterns for satisfaction with financial management for couples at the adolescent stage of the family life cycle?

The distribution of resource consistency patterns for the five resources studied are reported in Table 5.1. The mean was used as a breaking point for recoding individual raw scores into high or low categories on a particular resource.

Looking at the distributions of all the resources examined, between 57 and 64% of the couples were classified as resource consistent (both members having scores which fell into the same group either high or low). The distribution of the remaining couples which were located in the resource inconsistent groups ranged from a low of 32% on the sexual relationship resource to a high of 43% on the financial management resource.

It is noteworthy that all four possible resource consistency patterns were well represented but the majority of couples fell into the resource consistent rather than inconsistent categories. This is noteworthy given previous research which has studied the concept of consistency or agreement between spouses (Larsen, 1974). In previous research, which has utilized correlations as a measure of consistency,

correlation coefficients have tended to be low between husband and wife indicating low agreement or consensus on even concrete matters such as level of income.

It is also interesting to note that the percentage of couples in the consistent categories appeared to be greater for marital satisfaction, personality issues and satisfaction with their sexual relationship than for family and friends, and financial management resources. The commonality between these resources may be their association with core aspects of the marital relationship whereas family and friends and financial management may be more peripheral in that they do not deal with internal relationship qualities.

A closer look at each of the major groups, consistent and inconsistent, reveals that the largest percentage of couples located in the resource consistent low group for four of the five resources. The one exception was the resource, financial management. On this particular resource, the largest percentage of couples was located in the resource consistency group in which the husband's score was above the mean and the wife's below.

Having answered this particular research question about the distribution of resource consistency patterns, a further question was generated by the data. Did the distribution which was observed differ from that which would be expected by chance? A 2X2 Chi Square Goodness of Fit test was run for each of the five resources. The results are reported in Table 5.2.

Table 5.1

Percentage Distribution: Couple Resource Consistency Patterns

		<u>Resource Consistency Pattern</u>			
<u>Resource</u>		Consistent		Inconsistent	
		(1) LL	2 (HH)	3 (HL)	4 (LH)
Marital Satisfaction	%	34	30%	18	18
	N	(69)	(60)	(36)	(36)
		64%		36%	
Personality Issues	%	35	31	18	16
	N	(71)	(63)	(35)	(32)
		66%		34%	
Sexual Relationship	%	38	30	15.5	16.5
	N	(76)	(61)	(31)	(33)
		68%		32%	
Family and Friends	%	32	27	18	32
	N	(64)	(54)	(37)	(46)
		59%		41%	
Financial Management	%	28	29	34	9
	N	(57)	(58)	(68)	(18)
		57%		43%	

N = 201

Key: Resource Consistency Patterns

- 1 = Consistent low - both members low (LL)
- 2 = Consistent high - both members high (HH)
- 3 = Inconsistent - Husband high - wife low - (HL)
- 4 = Inconsistent - Husband low - wife high - (LH)

Results of the chi square test indicated that the observed distributions differed significantly from that which would be expected by chance on all five couple resource variables. The obtained χ^2 was significant at the .001 level for the resource variables of marital satisfaction, satisfaction with personality issues and behavior, financial management, and sexual relationships whereas the χ^2 was significant at the .05 level for the resource variable of family and friends.

The McNemar test (Siegel, 1956) was also utilized as a test of proportions to determine whether the observed proportions in each resource consistency group for a particular resource were statistically different from one another. The tests which were statistically significant are reported in Table 5.3. Reports of the non-significant McNemar test results for each couple resource are reported in Table B.1, Appendix B).

Results of the McNemar test indicated that the observed proportion of couples who fell into group 1 (LL) and group 2 (HH) were not significantly different from one another on any resource variable (see Table B.1, Appendix B). On only one resource, financial management, was there a statistically significant difference between the proportions in group 3 (HL) and group 4 (LH). When each resource was examined separately (see Table 5.3), it was found that on the six proportions tests run on the sexual relationship variable, four showed statistically significant differences between the proportions in each resource consistency group. The tests between the differences in proportions between group 1 (LL) versus group 2 (HH) and group 3 (HL) versus group 4 (LH) were not statistically significant. A similar pattern emerged

Table 5.2

Results of Chi Square Goodness of Fit Test
for Couple Resources

Resource	Resource Consistency Group				
		Consistent		Inconsistent	
Marital Satisfaction	Group	1 (LL)	2 (HH)	3 (HL)	4 (LH)
	Observed	69	60	36	36
	Expected	50.25	50.25	50.25	50.25
		Chi Square 16.970		D.F. 3	Significance 0.001
Personality Issue	Group	1 (LL)	2 (HH)	3 (HL)	4 (LH)
	Observed	71	63	35	32
	Expected	50.25	50.25	50.25	50.25
		Chi Square 23.060		D.F. 3	Significance 0.000
Sexual Relationship	Group	1 (LL)	2 (HH)	3 (HL)	4 (LH)
	Observed	76	61	31	32
	Expected	50.25	50.25	50.25	50.25
		Chi Square 28.791		D.F. 3	Significance 0.000
Family and Friends	Group	1 (LL)	2 (HH)	3 (HL)	4 (LH)
	Observed	76	54	37	46
	Expected	50.25	50.25	50.25	50.25
		Chi Square 7.896		D.F. 3	Significance 0.048
Financial Management	Group	1 (LL)	2 (HH)	3 (HL)	4 (LH)
	Observed	57	58	68	18
	Expected	50.25	50.25	50.25	50.25
		Chi Square 29.070		D.F. 3	Significance 0.000

Key:

Group = Resource Consistency Group

1 = Consistent low - both Husband - Wife Low (LL)

2 = Consistent high - both Husband - Wife High (HH)

3 = Inconsistent - Husband High - Wife Low (HL)

4 = Inconsistent - Husband Low - Wife High (LH)

Table 5.3
Statistically Significant McNemar Tests for
Couple Level Variables by Groups

<u>Variable</u>		<u>Couple Resource Consistency Groups</u>				
Groups		1 (HH) by 3 (HL)	1 (HH) by 4 (LH)	2 (HH) by 3 (HL)	2 (HH) by 4 (LH)	3 (HL) by 4 (LH)
Sexual Relation- ship	Chi					
	Square	18.09	16.18	9.14	7.75	
	2 tailed p	0.000*	0.000*	0.002*	0.000*	
Family and Friends	Chi					
	Square	6.69				
	2 tailed p	0.010*				
Marital Satisfact- ion	Chi					
	Square	9.75	9.75	5.51	5.51	
	2 tailed p	0.002*	0.002*	0.019*	0.019*	
Personal- ity Issues	Chi					
	Square	11.56	14.02	7.44	9.44	
	2 tailed p	0.001*	0.001*	0.006*	0.002*	
Financial Manage- ment	Chi		19.25		20.01	27.92
	Square		0.000*		0.000*	0.000*
	2 tailed p					

*Statistically Significant <.05

Key:

- 1 = Consistent Low - both Husband and Wife Low (LL)
- 2 = Consistent High - both Husband - Wife High (HH)
- 3 = Inconsistent - Husband High - Wife Low (HL)
- 4 = Inconsistent - Husband Low - Wife High (LH)

pattern emerged for the marital satisfaction and personality issues variables.

Different results are apparent for both the family and friends, and financial management resource variables. On the family and friends variable, the differences in proportions between group 1 (LL) and group 3 (HL) were statistically significant. With respect to the financial management resource variable, statistically significant results were obtained between the proportions in group 1 (LL) versus group 4 (LH), group 2 (HH) versus group 4 (LH), and group 3 (HL) versus group 4 (LH).

One wonders whether the commonality in the findings might not be related to the importance of the marital satisfaction, sexual relationship and personality issues resources to different and more central aspects of the couple relationship. Chapter VI will discuss this in more detail.

Question 2. General question. What is the nature of resource consistency patterns on selected family resources for families at the adolescent stage of the family life cycle?

Specific Questions.

(a) What is the nature of family resource consistency patterns for perceived family strengths for families at the adolescent stage of the family life cycle?

(b) What is the nature of resource consistency patterns for perceived quality of life for families at the adolescent stage of the family life cycle?

The percentage of families located in the various resource consistency groups which were arrived at by developing a cross tabulation table for mother's, father's and adolescent's scores on each resource are presented in Table 5.4. It is apparent that no single type of family resource pattern exists for this sample, although the

largest percentage again fell into group one (LL) for both of the family level resources: Quality of Life and Family Strength. A fairly even distribution of families were located in the various inconsistent groups. A somewhat surprising result was the high percentage of families located in the parent-adolescent coalition groups (labelled such by a parent and adolescent scoring similarly, either high or low). As well, there was a nearly even split between mother-adolescent coalitions and father-adolescent coalitions in all specified resource categories. No comparison was made which was based upon sex of adolescent and sex of parent in the determination of a particular coalition.

It is evident that family resource consistency patterns are more complex than couple patterns due to the number of perceptions to be considered in arriving at a pattern. It would therefore be less likely for consistency among family members to occur. One must note that while the percentage of families which fell into the consistent groups was lower than that for couples, the percentages were still 45% for quality of life and 52% for perception of family strength. Again, one might examine the nature of each of these resource variables carefully in order to begin to explain the differences in the number of families who reported similar perceptions. One might ask whether there are some aspects of family life in which it is easier to develop shared perspectives.

Table 5.4

Percentage Distribution of Family Resource Consistency Patterns										
Resource	Family Consistent		Family Inconsistent							
			P/A Coalition				Parent Coalition			
			F/A		M/A					
Family Strength	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8		
	34	18	7	9	9	7	9	7		
	52%		16%		16%		16%			
			32%							
			48%							
Quality of Life	23	19	7	12	9.5	9.5	9	11		
	42%		19%		19%		20%			
			38%							
			58%							

N = 138

Key:

- | | |
|--|-------------------------------------|
| Group 1 = Resource Consistent Low - (LLL) | Family Consistent |
| Group 2 = Resource Consistent High - (HHH) | |
| Group 3 = Resource Inconsistent | Parent/
Adolescent
Coalitions |
| - (Father, Adolescent Resource High - (FAH) | |
| Group 4 = Resource Inconsistent | |
| - (Father, Adolescent Resource Low) - (FAL) | |
| Group 5 = Resource Inconsistent | Parent/
Adolescent
Coalitions |
| - (Mother, Adolescent Resource High) - (MAH) | |
| Group 6 = Resource Inconsistent | Parent/
Adolescent
Coalitions |
| - (Mother, Adolescent Resource Low) - (MAL) | |
| Group 7 = (Parents Resource High) - (PH) | Parent Coalition |
| Group 8 = Resource Inconsistent | |
| - (Parents Resource Low) - (PL) | |

A 3x3x3 Chi Square Goodness of Fit Test was again run for each family resource to determine if the observed proportions in each of the eight consistency groups differed from that which would have been expected by chance. In both the quality of life and family strength resource tests, the proportions in each of the eight consistency groups varied significantly from chance. This is to say that the observed proportions in each group differed from that which would have been expected by chance. The results are reported in Table 5.5.

The McNemar test was utilized again as a test of proportions to determine whether the observed proportions in each group were statistically different from each other. This meant comparing the proportions in each group with every other resource consistency group for a total of fifty-six proportions test. For family strength only thirteen of these tests were statistically significant. On the quality of life resource nine tests were statistically significant. These are reported in Table 5.6. The remaining data regarding these tests may be found in Table B.2 in Appendix B.

Question three. What is the relationship between the particular resource consistent pattern on selected couple resources and the couple mean coping score?

For this research question the null hypothesis tested was that the mean couple coping scores in each resource consistency group were equal. This general hypothesis was tested separately for each of the five resources: marital satisfaction, satisfaction with sexual relationship, satisfaction with financial management, satisfaction with family and friends, and satisfaction with personality issues. The general hypothesis, however was developed into two specific hypotheses

Table 5.5

Results of the Chi Square Goodness of Fit Test

For Family Level Resources

Resource: Quality of Life

Group	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Observed	32	26	10	17	12	15	13	13
Expected	17.25	17.25	17.25	17.25	17.25	17.25	17.25	17.25

Chi Square
24.09

D.F.
7

Significance
0.001

Resource: Family Strength

Group	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Observed	47	25	10	12	12	10	12	10
Expected	17.25	17.25	17.25	17.25	17.25	17.25	17.25	17.25

Chi Square
68.73

D.F.
7

Significance
0.000

Key:

Group = Family Resource Consistency Pattern

Group 1 = Resource Consistent Low - (LLL)

Group 2 = Resource Consistent High - (HHH)

Family Consistent

Group 3 = Resource Inconsistent

- (Father, Adolescent Resource High) - (FAH)

Group 4 = Resource Inconsistent

- (Father, Adolescent Resource Low) - (FAL)

Group 5 = Resource Inconsistent

- (Mother, Adolescent Resource High) - (MAH)

Group 6 = Resource Inconsistent

- (Mother, Adolescent Resource Low) - (MAL)

Parent/
Adolescent
Coalitions

Group 7 = Resource Inconsistent

- (Parents Resource High) - (PH)

Group 8 = Resource Inconsistent

- (Parents Resource Low) - (PL)

Parent Coalition

Table 5.6

Statistically Significant McNemar Test for
Family Level Variables by Resource Consistency Group

VariableFamily Strength

Groups

Group 1 by	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Chi Square	6.12	22.74	19.59	19.59	22.737	19.59	22.74
2 tailed p	0.01	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
Group 2 by		3	4	5	6	7	8
Chi Square		5.60	3.8	3.89	5.60	3.89	5.60
2 tailed p		0.022	0.05	0.05	0.02	0.05	0.02

Quality of Life

Group 1 by	3	5	6	7	8
Chi Square	10.50	8.10	5.46	7.20	7.20
2 tailed p	0.001	0.004	0.02	0.007	0.007
Group 2 by	3	5	6	7	8
Chi Square	6.25	4.45		3.69	3.69
2 tailed p	0.012	0.04		0.05	0.05

*Statistically Significant < .05

N = 138

Key:

Group = Resource Consistency Pattern

Group 1 = Resource Consistent Low - (LLL) } Family Consistent

Group 2 = Resource Consistent High - (HHH) }

Group 3 = Resource Inconsistent

- (Father, Adolescent Resource High) - (FAH)

Group 4 = Resource Inconsistent

- (Father, Adolescent Resource Low) - (FAL)

Group 5 = Resource Inconsistent

- (Mother, Adolescent Resource Low) - (MAH)

Group 6 = Resource Inconsistent

- (Mother, Adolescent Resource Low) - (MAL)

Group 7 = Resource Inconsistent

- (Parents Resource High) - (PH)

Group 8 = Resource Inconsistent

- (Parents Resource Low) - (PL)

Parent Coalition

Parent/
Adolescent
Coalitions

for each resource, one using group mean scores on the coping scale and one using group discrepancy scores.

General Hypothesis for Question Three.

Null hypothesis $H_0: \mu_1 = \mu_2 = \mu_3 = \mu_4$

Alternate hypothesis $H_a: \mu_i \neq \mu_j$ for some i, j

Specific hypothesis for Question three.

A. The mean coping scores in each resource consistency group for the resource marital satisfaction are equal.

B. The mean discrepancy coping scores in each resource consistency group for the resource marital satisfaction are equal.

C. The mean coping scores in each resource consistency group for the resource personality issues are equal.

D. The mean discrepancy coping scores in each resource consistency group for the resource personality issues are equal.

E. The mean coping scores in each resource consistency group for the resource satisfaction with the sexual relationship are equal.

F. The mean discrepancy coping scores for each resource consistency group for the resource satisfaction with the sexual relationship are equal.

G. The mean coping scores in each resource consistency group for the resource satisfaction with family and friends are equal.

H. The mean discrepancy coping scores in each resource consistency group for the resource satisfaction with family and friends are equal.

I. The mean coping scores in each resource consistency group for the resource satisfaction with financial management are equal.

J. The mean discrepancy coping scores in each resource consistency group for the resource satisfaction with financial management are equal.

A one way analysis of variance test was used to test each hypothesis with a post hoc comparison, Scheffe procedure (Seigel,

1956), utilized for each significant ANOVA test. The findings related to each hypothesis are summarized according to specific resources.

Marital Satisfaction

The results of the one way ANOVA test indicates that null hypothesis A was rejected (Table 5.7). There was a significant difference ($p < .05$) among the couple mean coping scores of the four resource consistency groups. The post hoc comparison (Siegel, 1956) determined that the mean of group two (HH) was significantly different ($p < .05$) from the mean of group one (LL). The ANOVA test of hypothesis B using the group mean discrepancy scores on the coping variable did not allow rejection of the null hypothesis. Table C.1 in Appendix C reports the test results for hypothesis B¹.

Personality Issues

Null hypothesis C was rejected (Table 5.7). The follow-up comparison (Siegel, 1956), determined that the mean coping score of group two (HH) was significantly different ($p < .05$) from that of group one (LL).

Null hypothesis D was not rejected. Results of this test are reported in Table C.2 in Appendix C.

¹Only statistically significant tests are reported in the text of the thesis.

Sexual Relationship

The null hypothesis E, using couple mean scores was also rejected. There was a significant difference ($p < .05$) between at least one couple resource consistency group. The follow-up comparison test (Siegel, 1956), as is indicated that there was a statistically significant difference between coping scores in group two (HH) and group one (LL) at the .01 level and a statistically significant difference between group three (HL) and group one (LL).

The null hypothesis F using couple discrepancy scores was not rejected. Results of this test are reported in Table C.2 in Appendix C.

Family and Friends

The null hypothesis G and H for this resource category were not rejected in the ANOVA test using either couple mean scores or couple discrepancy scores. There was no statistically significant difference between the mean coping score or mean discrepancy score of the four resource consistency groups. All resource groups' coping scores were similar. Results of this test are reported in Table C.2 in Appendix C.

Financial Management

The findings related to this resource category indicated that the null hypothesis I and J were not rejected using either couple mean or couple mean discrepancy scores. There was no statistically significant difference between the coping scores of the various couple resource consistency groups. Results of these tests are reported in Table C.2 in Appendix C.

Table 5.7
Analysis of Variance for Couple Resource
Consistency Patterns and Group Mean Coping Score

Score	D.F.	S.S.	M.S.	F.	P.
<u>Marital Satisfaction</u>					
Between Groups	3	1024.46	341.49	4.289	0.006
Within Groups	197	15719.57	79.79		
total	200	16744.02			
Scheffe					
Mean	Groups				
90.195	1	1	4	3	2
94.194	4				
94.472	3				
95.466	2	*			
<u>Personality Issues</u>					
Between Groups	3	1147.69	382.57	4.83	0.003
Within Groups	197	15596.32	79.17		
Total	200	16744.02			
Scheffe					
Mean	Groups	1	3	4	2
90.76	Group 1				
91.95	3				
93.95	4				
96.42	2	*			
<u>Sexual Relationship</u>					
Between Groups	3	1253.92	417.97	5.32	0.002
Within Groups	197	15490.13	78.63		
Total	200	16744.04			
Scheffe					
Mean	Groups	1	4	2	3
90.14	1				
93.91	4				
95.51	2	**			
95.74	3	*			

* .05 level

** .01 level

Analysis of Variance was carried out to determine the relationship between couple resource consistency patterns and couple coping scores. Couple mean coping scores and couple discrepancy scores were utilized to measure the couple as a unit. The couple mean score determined the position of the husbands and wives in the various resource consistency groups on the coping variable. Conversely, couple discrepancy scores were utilized to illuminate the degree of difference between husbands' and wives' perception in the various resource consistency groups on the coping variable. The ANOVA and post hoc comparison tests indicate that there were statistically significant differences in the couple mean coping scores between group one (LL) and group two (HH) on the marital satisfaction, personality issues and sexual relationship variables. It was further noted that there was also a significant difference in the mean score between group one (LL) and group three (HL) on the sexual relationship variable. Results of the Scheffe test indicated that the means for the couple coping scores were greater for group two (HH) and group three (HL) in comparison to group one (LL). That is, group two (HH), and group three (HL) had higher coping scores which indicated more effective coping strategies utilized by the couple in response to problems and difficulties they encountered. Further to this, there were no significant differences among the mean or discrepancy scores on the coping variable within any couple resource consistency group for either the family and friends and financial management variables.

Question four: What is the relationship between particular resource consistency patterns in selected family resources and the family coping score?

In this research question the null hypothesis tested was that the mean family coping scores in each resource consistency group were equal. This general hypothesis was tested separately for each of the two resources: family strength and quality of life. The general hypothesis was further developed into two specific hypotheses for each resource, one using group mean raw scores on the coping scale and one using group mean discrepancy scores.

General Hypothesis for Question Four

Null hypothesis $H_0: \mu_1 = \mu_2 = \mu_3 = \mu_4 = \mu_5 = \mu_6 = \mu_7 = \mu_8$

Alternate hypothesis $H_a: \mu_i \neq \mu_j$ for some i, j

Specific hypothesis for Question Four

A. The mean coping scores in each resource consistency group for the resource family strength are equal.

B. The mean discrepancy coping scores in each resource consistency group for the resource family strength are equal.

C. The mean coping scores in each resource consistency group for the resource quality of life are equal.

D. The mean discrepancy coping scores in each resource consistency group for the resource quality of life are equal.

A one way analysis of variance test was used to test each hypothesis. The findings related to each hypothesis are summarized according to specific resources.

Family Strengths

The findings related to this resource category indicated that the null hypotheses A and B were not rejected using either family mean or family mean discrepancy scores. There was no statistically significant

difference between the coping scores of the various family resource consistency groups. Results of these tests are reported in Table C.3 in Appendix C.

Quality of Life

The null hypotheses C and D for this resource category were not rejected in the ANOVA test using either family mean scores or family discrepancy scores. There was no statistically significant difference between the mean coping score or mean discrepancy score of the eight family resource consistency groups. All family resource groups' coping scores were sufficiently similar. Results of this test are reported in Table C.3 in Appendix C.

A summary and discussion of the findings of this study will be presented as they relate to each question in Chapter VI.

CHAPTER VI

DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

Family resources have been identified as important variables in this process. The purpose of this study was to examine the resource consistency patterns of a set of selected couple and family resources and the relationship between the identified resource patterns and couple and family coping scores. The study utilized a data base from a national United States study (Olson et al., 1983). Mothers', fathers' and adolescents' responses to a questionnaire provided the data. This investigation utilized the double ABCX model (McCubbin et al., 1983) of stress and coping as a theoretical model. Resource consistency was viewed as a facilitating element of the B factor of the model. It was argued that families consisting of individuals with similar and high levels of resources would have higher coping scores than would families consisting of individuals with similar and low levels or discrepant levels of resources. The analysis involved using two levels of analysis - couple and family.

The major findings related to each question will be summarized and discussed. Following this discussion, the limitations of the study will be identified and suggestions made for future research.

Question One:

What is the nature of the resource consistency patterns on selected resources for couples at the adolescent stage of the family life cycle?

Major Findings

1. Four couple resource consistency patterns emerged. Two resource consistent patterns and two resource inconsistent patterns.

2. The largest percentage of couples were located in the couple resource consistent group in which both husbands' and wives' scores were below the mean on each specific resource.

3. The results of the Chi Square Goodness of Fit Test indicated that the observed distribution differed significantly from that which would be expected by chance on all couple resource variables.

4. The results of the McNemar test (a test of differences in changes of proportion for dichotomous variables) indicated that there were significant differences between the proportions in various groups. The significant differences were between:

(a) group one (LL) and group three (HL) in the sexual relationship, family and friends, marital satisfaction, personality issues, and financial management resource variables.

(b) group one (LL) and group four (LH) in the resource variables of sexual relationship, marital satisfaction, personality issues, and financial management.

(c) group two (HH) and group three (HL) in the resource variables of sexual relationship, marital satisfaction and personality issues.

(d) group two (HH) and group four (LH) in the resource variables of sexual relationship, marital satisfaction, personality issues, and financial management.

(e) group three (HL) and group four (LH) in the resource variable of financial management.

Discussion

The results clearly indicated that the majority of couples were resource consistent, in that both partners' level of agreement was in the same specified range. This could be considered a somewhat surprising result considering the previous studies utilizing correlation as an index of agreement.

In previous discussions of agreement, it was established that consistency may be conceptualized in different ways. One way is to view consistency as the degree to which family members view family life in exactly the same way. This would then be labeled absolute or complete consistency. Consistency when conceptualized in this manner then would have but one form $X_1 = X_2$. Correlations have been used to measure the degree of absolute or complete consistency between family members. The second way consistency may be conceptualized, is agreement within a particular range, the specified range being arbitrarily determined. Consistency between family members would exist if both family members' perceptions of various aspects of family life fall within the specified range. This was the conceptualization utilized in this study.

Given these two ways of determining consistency between family members, it is not surprising that the results differ between the correlation estimate of consistency and the range estimate. The more important question, however, is which of those methods is most appropriate to describe the couple or family reality? It could be argued that defining "consistency" as agreement within a range offers a better approximation of a shared perspective in family units than does

complete agreement. Family members experience common events, yet their perceptions are always filtered by their unique developmental tasks, differing observational and evaluation skills and the distractions in their environment. In addition, the agreement within a range method allows for the identification of several ways of achieving consistency. The recognition of resource consistent couples who both have high levels of a particular resource, as well as resource couples who both have low levels of that resource, allows for separating out couples who are indeed consistent (have high correlations) but achieve that consistency by having low scores. In terms of resource variables, this may be of particular importance since two individuals with similar low levels of a resource have a smaller resource pool than would two individuals with similar high levels of that resource. The impact of consistency or agreement on the level of a resource may therefore be influenced by the manner in which consistency is achieved - two low scores or two high scores. The present research did only a small scale test of this factor.

The findings further indicated that the percentage distribution of couples in the resource consistency groups were remarkably similar for the resource variables of marital satisfaction, personality issues, sexual relationships and family and friends, in that the largest percentage of couples fell into the resource consistent-low groups. The only exception to this being the financial management variable where the largest percentage of couples fell into the inconsistent group in which the husband's score was higher than the wife's score. This pattern is highly suggestive of a traditional sex role division of

labor, based upon expressive and instrumental roles. The instrumental role has been typically reserved for the husband/father (Boss, 1980; Brim, 1965). While questionnaire data do not allow us to explore this interpretation in depth it does suggest that the type of resource variables on which family members agree or disagree may be another factor to explore when looking at patterns of resource consistency between family members. There may be some resources or issues in which it is easier to achieve similarity between family members either because the particular variable or resource is contributed to directly by both members (as in the case of marital satisfaction or sexual satisfaction) or because there are fewer normative prescriptions about the attainment of particular levels of that resource. This interesting and dynamic aspect of achieving resource consistency within family groups needs further exploration.

The largest percentage of families were located in the resource consistent low group. This group, even though they are in agreement, possessed a lower or limited level of the specified resources. This pattern of consistency needs to be given serious consideration as previous literature has not explicitly dealt with how agreement had been achieved only whether it had been achieved. For example, it was not noted whether the members were consistent high, consistent low or consistent somewhere between these two ranges. The patterns or types of consistency within families are important aspects to be considered by professionals working with families. It emphasizes the importance of viewing each family as unique and thus the need to assess families to determine their level of agreement in order to direct health

promotion and/or intervention to their needs. It further has implications for program development for both the families and individuals or groups of individuals who will be working with families.

The findings clearly indicated that for several variables, couples who were resource consistent low, had lower coping scores than either the resource consistent high group or the two resource inconsistent groups. This implies that the size of the couples' resource pool may be an important factor to consider. Hess and Handel (1967) argued that families that agreed on basic family issues would be able to direct their energies toward promoting healthy family functioning, whereas families with limited agreement needed to direct their energies towards maintenance. In addition it could be argued that couples in which both partners have low levels of a particular resource have a smaller resource pool to draw from than those with high levels.

Question Two:

What is the nature of resource consistency patterns on selected family resources for families at the adolescent stage of the family life cycle?

Major Findings

1. Eight family resource consistency patterns emerged - two resource consistency, two resource inconsistent - parent coalition, and four resource inconsistent - parent/adolescent coalition.

2. The percentage of families located in the various resource consistency groups, which were developed by cross tabulation, indicated that the greatest percentage of families was located in response consistent groups. Of the consistent families, the largest percentage of families was located in the resource consistent-low group.

3. Families which were classified as following into resource inconsistent groups were evenly distributed among the resource inconsistent groups.

4. The Chi Square Goodness of Fit Test which was run to determine if the observed proportions in each of the eight resource consistent groups indicated that the observed distributed differed significantly from chance on both Quality of Life and Family Strength resource variables.

5. The results of the McNemar test of proportions indicated that there were significant differences between the proportions of families included in each resource consistency group in the resource variables of Quality of Life and Family Strengths. The statistically significant differences were between the proportions observed in:

(a) group one (LLL) and group three (FAH); group four (FAL), group five (MAH), group six (MAL), group seven, (PH), and group eight (PL) in the resource variable Family Strength.

(b) group two (HHH) and group three (FAH), group four (FAL), group five (MAH), group six (MAL), group seven (PH), and group eight (PL) in the resource variable Family Strength.

(c) group one (LLL) and group three (FAH), group five (MAH), group six (MAL), group seven (PH), and group eight (PL) in the resource

variable Quality of Life.

(d) group two (HHH) and group three (FAH), group five (MAH), group seven (PH), and group eight (PL) in the resource variable Quality of Life.

Discussion

Findings at the family level of analysis indicated a higher level of consistency among family members using agreement within a range than would have been expected using correlation as an index of consistency. A greater percentage of families were located in each of the resource consistent groups than in any particular resource inconsistent group.

For the majority of families it was more common that the two parents were consistent than for one parent and the adolescent to be consistent. When one parent and the adolescent were in agreement they would fall into anyone of the four parent-child coalition groups. The result indicated that the percentage of families located in each of these parent-child coalition groups were remarkably similar. These groups while small are none the less interesting. One might ask: (1) what are some of the characteristics of these families?; (2) Do these families which have greater parent-child agreement than parental agreement operate differently when they experience stressors?

The data, while not conclusive, were suggestive of variability in consistency across resources. For example, 52% of the family on the resource variable of Family Strength were resource consistent, while on the Quality of Life resource variable only 42% of the families were

resource consistent. Thus, it cannot be assumed that if a family has a similar level of agreement of resources on one resource that this level of agreement will necessarily exist for all resource dimensions. This aspect in itself leads one to wonder how similar, or different, family units are on various other resource dimensions. It further suggests that family clinicians and researchers need to investigate and assess many dimensions of family life in order to determine whether in fact, families have such a thing as a family perspective.

The findings clearly illustrated the complexity of family life, by the increased number of resource consistent groups that results when mother, father and their adolescent were studied. These results suggest that the complexity of the perceptions of family life greatly increases with the addition of another family member. It became apparent that not only can the adolescent hold similar views to both parents but coalitions can develop between the adolescent and either one parent or the other.

The literature on family interaction suggests that the complexity of family relationships increases with each addition of another family member (Bossard & Boll, 1956; Toman, 1969). Toman's (1969) assessment of family interaction proposed that each parent develops a particular relationship with the child as well as with each other. Bossard and Boll (1956, p. 77) stated that the number of two-person interactions that exist between all of the family members may be determined by the following formula:

$$\frac{y^2 - y}{2} = x$$

x = the number of personal
interrelationships

y = the number of persons in the family

Thus in a family of three, two parents and one child, this would result in three, two person relationships. However in a family of five, two parents and three children, this would yield ten relationships. Similarly when looking at family patterns when additional members are added, the number of possible patterns increase in a manner similar to Bossard and Bolls' (1956) postulation of family relationships.

One additional point needs to be considered when discussing family complexity. In the present study, the male and female adolescents were considered as a single resource pool. By combining male and female adolescents into a single resource pool, six inconsistent resource patterns emerged. However, if the sex of the adolescent had been considered in the development of the various consistency groups, the number of resource consistency groups would have increased even further. Considering the sex of the adolescent would be an interesting aspect to investigate in the future. Differences between adolescent males and adolescent females were noted in previous research by Larsen (1974) regarding the degree of perceptual agreement achieved with their parents. Adding this variable of sex of the adolescent, in itself, may generate the formation of many questions that could provide added understanding of how consistent family members are on a variety of topics.

Question Three:

What is the relationship between the particular resource consistency pattern in selected couple resources and the couple mean coping score?

Major Findings

1. The results of the one way Analysis of Variance indicated that the null hypotheses was rejected on three resource variables: marital satisfaction, personality issues, and sexual relationship. The post hoc (Scheffe test) indicated that on the resource variables of:

(a) marital satisfaction, that there was significant difference between group two (HH) and group one (LL) mean coping score. Couples in group two had higher coping scores than did those in group one.

(b) personality issues, there was a statistically significant difference between the mean coping score in group two (HH) and that in group one (LL). Couples in group two had higher coping scores.

(c) sexual relationships, there was significant differences between group two (HH) and group one (LL) and between group three (HL) and group one (LL) mean coping scores. Couples in group two had a higher mean coping score than that of group one. Couples in group three had a higher coping score than that in group one.

2. The results of the ANOVA tests indicated that there were no statistically significant differences between the mean discrepancy coping scores of the four resource consistency groups in the resource variables of marital satisfaction, sexual relationship, personality issues, family and friends, and financial management.

Discussion

The data supported the initial hypothesis that consistency and high levels of a particular resource are related to increased mean scores on a coping measure. The couple discrepancy score however was not as useful as the couple mean in that no test was statistically significant.

The findings indicated that couples whose perceptual views of family life were highly consistent on the resource variables of marital satisfaction, satisfaction with personality issues and behaviors of one's spouse, and satisfaction with sexual relationships possessed a higher coping mean score than any other group. As well their coping score was significantly different from the coping score of the couples who were located in the resource consistent low group. These results suggest two important areas that need to be considered. The quality and quantity of the family units resource pool.

The literature on family resources and coping has indicated that the amount of resources possessed by a family is positively related to the family's ability to cope with the demands they experience. This is to say, that the larger the family's resource pool, the greater is the potential of the family to cope effectively with the demands they encounter. The investigators' determining the importance of the family's resource pool have predominantly asked only one family member about the family's resources and have used this data to compare the level of resources between spouses. Some literature on family resources has also alluded to the importance of the level of resources possessed by family members. Research findings suggest that family

members who possess a variety of resources at a high level have an enhanced quality of life and are able to deal more effectively with the challenges they encounter (Burr, 1973; Klein et al., 1979). This implies that families in which the members possess similar and high levels of resources are able to deal more effectively with problems they encounter as well as enhance family stability. The researchers (Burr, 1973; Klein et al., 1979) further suggested that when there is consistency between family members within the relationships, they are able to mobilize their resources to overcome the difficulties they encounter. Family members therefore are able to share in the tasks by providing additional resources that result in resolution of the demands encountered. This also intimates that the greater the number of family members contributing to the family resource pool with an equally high level of resources the more options the family has to draw from. As well, the possession of high levels minimizes the potential of the resource pool being depleted. Research done to date has not dealt with the issue of consistency between family members whose resource pool is limited.

As previously noted, the findings suggest that resources vary in value in relation to coping. Of the five couple resources (marital satisfaction, satisfaction with personality issues, satisfaction with sexual relations, satisfaction with financial management and satisfaction with family and friends) and the two family resources (family strengths and quality of life), the data indicated that the specific resources in which resource consistency related to higher coping mean scores were the resources of marital satisfaction, satisfaction with

personality issues and satisfaction with the sexual relationship. These appear to be more central aspects of the marital relationship than the remaining couple variables. This interpretation points to the importance of a strong marital unit in the achievement of coping. Previous research that described characteristics of healthy or well-functioning families have frequently cited the importance of the marital relationship as the basis for the quality of life experienced by the total family unit (Barnhill, 1979; Lewis et al., 1980, Otto, 1963, 1980; Satir, 1967; Stinnett et al., 1980). This literature notes the important role that the quality of the marital relationship plays in family life and provides insights into how a strong satisfying marital relationship benefits the total family unit.

Satir (1967) saw the marital couple as the architects of the family and the key to all other relationships. Blood and Wolfe (1960) highlighted the actual or potential benefits of the marital relationship as being a source of help to families in times of stress. Burke and Weir (1975) further proposed that a marriage which is highly satisfying to both partners promotes the development of a high level of trust. They further stated that trust between the marital partners facilitates the ability to work together during times of stress. Implied in the previous discussion is the importance of a high level of satisfaction in the marital relationship and that family members view the quality of the relationship in the same way.

Two techniques were utilized in this study to arrive at couple and family scores for the dependent variable, mean scores and discrepancy scores. Significant findings were obtained only with the use of mean

scores. No significant findings were obtained using discrepancy scores. These findings suggest that the mean score may be a more robust measure when assessing family members as unit. In previous research the family has generally been studied in terms of individual family members and/or from the perspective of one family member, however, the complexity and diversity of the couple was not adequately illustrated utilizing this type of approach. The need to analyze the couple as a unit has resulted in the development of a variety of statistical techniques which attempts to describe the couple as a unit. Olson et al., (1983) further proposed that using a variety of methods to arrive at couple or family scores might provide a more comprehensive picture of the family as a system.

The two techniques utilized in this study attempted to assess different dimensions of family life. The mean or average score was utilized to describe the couple as a system. The mean score provides a fairly accurate picture of the family members' position on a scale when each family member's score is relatively close (Olson et al., 1983). However, when the family members' score were very discrepant, the mean score masks individual differences. Olson et al. (1983, p. 272) postulated that a mean score "may be an important measure even when it washes out the individual differences", in that "it may more accurately reflect the behavior" of the family members as a unit.

Discrepancy scores, on the other hand, assess the "degree of difference" between family members' perceptions (Olson et al., 1983, p. 272). This score illuminates the differences between family members. Olson and associates (1983) concluded that these two techniques

describe different dimensions of family members' relationship, and therefore may be complementary to one another.

Question Four:

What is the relationship between the particular family resource consistency pattern of selected family resources and the family's ability to cope?

Major Findings

1. The results of the one-way analysis of variance tests indicated that there were no statistically significant differences between the mean coping scores of the various resource consistency groups in either Family Strength and Quality of Life resource variables.

2. The results of the ANOVA tests indicated that there were no statistically significant differences between the discrepancy coping scores of the eight resource consistency groups in either the Family Strength and Quality of Life resource variables.

Discussion

The findings clearly indicated that on the two family resource variables Family Strength and Quality of Life there were no significant differences between the group mean coping scores.

In light of this finding, there are several factors which may have contributed to their being no difference between the coping scores of the various resource groups. Consideration needs to be directed towards

the limited number of family resources investigated, the smaller sample size compared with the couple level of analysis, and lastly the increased number of resource consistency groups and the decreased number of families in each cell. Before conclusions can be drawn about the relationship between family consistency patterns and coping, it is suggested that further studies must be done.

Limitations of the Study

This study of marital dyads and three person family units had to contend with the general limitations imposed by the utilization of secondary analysis as its primary technique. In addition the methods utilized contributed several other limitations which will be discussed in this section.

Secondary analysis limited the choice and selection of resource variables which could be studied as independent variables. It has already been noted that the type of resource variable studied may influence consistency patterns. The range of variables as specified by the original study.

The method utilized to measure the dependent variable, coping, provides a limited view of this dynamic concept. The questionnaire data utilized focused on individual family members' perceptions of family coping at one point in time. Thus, this measure of family coping provides a static view and one arrived at through methodological creation of a family score rather than in actual assessment during interaction with other family members.

Another limitation to be considered is the sample. The sample in this study predominately consisted of white middle income families living throughout the United States. While the sample is homogenous it does not allow for generalizations to be made about other groups, particularly those who refuse to participate in the study.

Our data while referring to family groups, still only studied three family members, the husband, the wife, and one adolescent from each family. Therefore, it cannot be concluded that a complete picture of family resource patterns exists, however the data improves upon existing knowledge.

Suggestions for Further Research

The primary findings in this study highlighted the variety of resource consistency patterns that emerged and the relationship between these couple and family level resource consistency patterns and coping. In the process of answering these research questions and analyzing the data several important areas requiring further investigation emerged.

Concept of consistency. Further study is encouraged in the re-examination of the conceptualization and operationalization of the concept of agreement among family members. In the study of agreement within a range one could be advised to look at other ranges than those created by a mean split.

The need is also apparent to use a multi method approach for data collection when investigating family process variables. Interaction and perception are both important and central factors to consider in order to achieve an accurate view of the family as a unit.

Couple scores. Another recommendation for further research would be to encourage continued interest in the development and refinement of couple and family scores. Two scoring techniques developed in the recent works of Olson and associates (1983) were utilized in this study. Only mean scores resulted in significant findings with respect to resource consistency and coping scores. This may indicate that mean scores are more robust than discrepancy scores. There is not a sufficient body of research which determines the relative usefulness of these two researcher generated estimates of family scores compared to other techniques of assessing a group quality (e.g. interaction analysis).

Resources and coping. Further research must continue to identify other aspects of the B factor which may help distinguish between families who function well and those who function poorly. While resources have been mentioned in most theoretical descriptions of the stress and coping process, it is evident that the resource variable is made up of many unique aspects. Resource consistency is but one of these. The resource consistency patterns identified suggest the complexity of family life. On the other hand, they also suggest the many ways families may achieve their goals. Lewis et al. (1982) in a study of healthy family functioning, titled their book No Single Thread and suggested that families have many different mixes of resources which allow them to function adequately. Similarly, by looking more carefully at how families distribute their resources, for example, by type of resources, by sex of parent and child, we may come to appreciate better the unlimited potential of family groups.

Working with families. While the research reported here is but a small step in the total understanding of resource consistency and family coping, each segment of research has the potential of increasing our understanding of family life, and particularly the factors which influence a family's responses to stressful demands which they encounter. Findings from this research and the suggestions for future research have implications not only for families themselves but also for practitioners working with families. Practitioners play important roles in helping families shape the goals which they attempt to achieve. One way to help families is to assist them in developing realistic standards for the level of agreement necessary to cope with stressors in their everyday life. Family life educators, whether they be nurses, home economists, social workers or psychologists provide information to families about desirable levels of interaction. Our assumptions about family life, whether they be a belief that a family view of reality is possible or not or whether they be a belief that absolute agreement between family members is attainable or not, influences how we advise family members. These assumptions about family life need to be continually tested in research and practice.

The finding that families may achieve consistency in different ways either by having similar high or low levels, also indicate that practitioners need to be prepared to design family enrichment or educational strategies based upon what is in the family. A family life educator would make different recommendations to a family who had similar low levels of an essential resource than one with discrepant levels of the same resource. Research and practice should go hand in

hand. Researchers must continue to challenge our conceptualizations of family life so that our measurement of these variables will increasingly be better approximations of "the family's reality." Similarly practitioners must be good interpreters of research results so that family practice is kept dynamic and timely.

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APPENDIX A
RESEARCH INSTRUMENTATION¹

ENRICH: Enriching and Nurturing Relationship issues, Communication and
Happiness

Family Strength

Quality of Life

F-COPES: Family Coping Strengths

¹The following instruments presented in this Appendix are copyrighted.
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Table A.1

ENRICH: Enriching and Nurturing Relationship Issues,
Communication and Happiness

David H. Olson, David G. Fournier, & Joan M. Druckman

RESPONSE CHOICES

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Agree	Moderately Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Strongly Disagree

MARITAL SATISFACTION

1. I am not pleased with the personality characteristics and personal habits of my partner.
2. I am very happy with how we handle role responsibilities in our marriage.
3. I am not happy about our communication and feel my partner does not understand me.
4. I am very happy about how we make decisions and resolve conflicts.
5. I am unhappy about our financial position and the way we make financial decisions.
6. I am very happy with how we manage our leisure activities and the time we spend together.
7. I am very pleased about how we express affection and relate sexually.
8. I am not satisfied with the way we each handle our responsibilities as parents.
9. I am dissatisfied about our relationship with my parents, in-laws, and/or friends.
10. I feel very good about how we each practice our religious beliefs and values.

PERSONALITY ISSUES

1. My partner is too critical or often has a negative outlook.
2. Sometimes I am concerned about my partner's temper.

3. At times, I am concerned that my partner appears to be unhappy or withdrawn.
4. My partner's smoking and/or drinking habits are a problem.
5. At times, my partner is not dependable or does not always follow through on things.
6. When we are with others, I am sometimes upset with my partner's behavior.
7. Sometimes my partner is too stubborn.
8. It bothers me that my partner is often late.
9. Sometimes I have difficulty dealing with my partner's moodiness.
10. At times, I think my partner is too domineering.

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

1. Sometimes I wish my partner was more careful in spending money.
2. We always agree on how to spend our money.
3. We have difficulty deciding on how to handle our finances.
4. I am satisfied with our decisions about how much we should save.
5. We are both aware of our major debts, and they are not a problem for us.
6. We keep records of our spending so we can budget our money.
7. Use of credit cards and charge accounts has been a problem for us.
8. Deciding what is most important to spend out money on is a concern for us.
9. It bothers me that I cannot spend money without my partner's approval.
10. I am concerned about who is responsible for the money.

SEXUAL RELATIONSHIP

1. I am completely satisfied with the amount of affection my partner gives me.
2. We try to find ways to keep our sexual relationship interesting and enjoyable.

3. I am concerned that my partner may not be interested in me sexually.
4. It is easy and comfortable for me to talk with my partner about sexual issues.
5. I sometimes worry that my partner may have thought about having a sexual relationship outside of our marriage (affair).
6. Our sexual relationship is satisfying and fulfilling to me.
7. I am reluctant to be affectionate with my partner because it is often misinterpreted as a sexual advance.
8. Sometimes I am concerned that my partner's interest in sex is not the same as mine.
9. I am satisfied with our decisions regarding family planning or birth control.
10. It bothers me that my partner uses or refuses sex in an unfair way.

FAMILY AND FRIENDS

1. Some friends or relatives do things that create tension in our marriage.
2. We spend the right amount of time with our relatives and friends.
3. I think my partner is too involved with or influenced by his/her family.
4. I do not enjoy spending time with some of our relatives or in-laws.
5. My partner likes all of my friends.
6. Sometimes my partner spends too much time with friends.
7. I feel that our parents expect too much attention or assistance from us.
8. I feel that our parents create problems in our marriage.
9. I really enjoy being with all my partner's friends.
10. It does not bother me when my partner spends time with friends of the opposite sex.

Table A.2

Family Strengths

David H. Olson, Andrea S. Larsen, & Hamilton I. McCubbin

RESPONSES CHOICES

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Moderately Agree	Strongly Disagree
1. We can express our feelings.				
2. We tend to worry about many things.				
3. We really do trust and confide in each other.				
4. We have the same problems over and over.				
5. Family members feel loyal to the family.				
6. Accomplishing what we want to do seems difficult for us.				
7. We are critical of each other.				
8. We share similar values and beliefs as a family.				
9. Things work out well for us as a family.				
10. Family members respect one another.				
11. There are many conflicts in our family.				
12. We are proud of our family.				

Table A.3

Quality Of Life
Parent Form

David H. Olson & Howard L. Barnes

RESPONSE SCALE				
1	2	3	4	5
Dissatisfied	Somewhat Dissatisfied	Generally Satisfied	Very Satisfied	Extremely Satisfied
<u>HOW SATISFIED ARE YOU WITH:</u>				
Marriage and Family Life		1. Your family 2. Your marriage 3. Your children 4. Number of children in your family		
Friends		5. Your friends		
Extended Family		6. Your relationship with relatives (aunts, uncles, grandparents, etc.)		
Health		7. Your own health 8. Health of other family members		
Home		9. Your current housing arrangement 10. Your household responsibilities 11. Other family members' household responsibilities 12. Space for your own needs 13. Space for your family needs		
Education		14. The amount of education you have 15. The educational programs designed to improve marriage and family life		
Time		16. Amount of free time 17. Time for self 18. Time for family 19. Time for housework 20. Time for earning money		
Religion		21. The religious life of your family 22. The religious life in your community		
Employment		23. Your principal occupation (job) 24. Your job security		
Mass Media		25. The amount of time family members watch TV 26. The quality of TV programs 27. The quality of movies 28. The quality of newspapers and magazines		
Financial Wellbeing		29. Your level of income 30. Money for family necessities		

- 31. Your ability to handle financial emergencies
- 32. Amount of money you owe
(mortgage, loans, credit cards)
- 33. Level of saving
- 34. Money for future needs of family
- Neighborhood and Community . . . 35. The schools in your community
- 36. The shopping in your community
- 37. The safety in your community
- 38. The neighborhood you live in
- 39. The recreational facilities
(parks, playgrounds, programs,
etc.)
- 40. The health care services

Quality of Life
Adolescent Form

David H. Olson & Howard L. Barnes

RESPONSE SCALE

1	2	3	4	5
Dissatisfied	Somewhat Dissatisfied	Generally Satisfied	Very Satisfied	Extremely Satisfied

HOW SATISFIED ARE YOU WITH:

Your Family Life

1. Your family
2. Your brothers and sisters
3. Number of children in your family

Friends

4. Your friends

Extended Family

5. Your relationship with relatives (aunts, uncles, grandparents, etc.)

Health

6. Your own health
7. Health of other family members

Home

8. Your current housing arrangements (the place you live)
9. Your responsibilities around the house

Education

10. Your current school situation

Leisure

11. Amount of free time you have
12. The way you use your free time

Religion

13. The religious life of your family
14. The religious life in your community

Mass Media

15. The amount of time family members watch TV
16. The quality of TV programs
17. The quality of movies
18. The quality of newspapers and magazines

Financial Wellbeing

19. Your family's ability to buy necessities
20. Your family's ability to buy luxuries
21. The amount of money you have to spend

Neighborhood and Community

22. The availability of shopping in your community
23. The safety in your community
24. The neighborhood you live in
25. The recreational facilities (parks, playgrounds, programs, etc.)

Table A.4

F-COPES

Hamilton I. McCubbin, Andrea S. Larsen & David H. Olson

RESPONSE CHOICES				
1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Moderately Agree	Strongly Agree
1. Sharing our difficulties with relatives. 2. Seeking encouragement and support from friends. 3. Knowing we have the power to solve major problems 4. Seeking information and advice from persons in other families who have faced the same or similar problems. 5. Seeking advice from relatives (grandparents, etc.) 6. Asking neighbors for favors and assistance. 7. Seeking assistance from community agencies and programs designed to help families in our situation. 8. Accepting that we have the strength within our own family to solve our problems. 9. Accepting gifts and favors from neighbors (ex. food, taking in mail, etc.) 10. Seeking information and advice from the family doctor. 11. Facing problems "head-on" and trying to get solutions right away. 12. Watching television. 13. Showing that we are strong. 14. Attending church services. 15. Accepting stressful events as a fact of life. 16. Sharing concerns with close friends. 17. Knowing luck plays a big part in how well we are able to solve family problems. 18. Accepting that difficulties occur unexpectedly. 19. Doing things with relatives (get-togethers, dinners, etc.). 20. Seeking professional counseling and help for family difficulties. 21. Believing we can handle our own problems. 22. Participating in church activities. 23. Defining the family problem in a more positive way so that we do not become too discouraged. 24. Asking relatives how they feel about problems we face. 25. Feeling that no matter what we do to prepare, we will have difficulty handling problems. 26. Seeking advice from a minister. 27. Believing if we wait long enough, the problem will go away. 28. Sharing problems with neighbors. 29. Having faith in God.				

APPENDIX B

NON SIGNIFICANT McNEMAR TESTS

Table B.1
Summary Table of Non Significant McNemar Tests for
Couple Level Variables

<u>Variables</u>	1 by 2	1 by 3	1 by 4	2 by 3	2 by 4	3 by 4
<u>Sexual Relationship</u>						
Chi Square	1.43					0.02
2 tailed p	0.23					0.90
<u>Family and Friends</u>						
Chi Square	0.69		2.63	2.81	6.49	0.77
2 tailed p	0.41		0.11	0.93	0.48	0.38
<u>Marital Satisfaction</u>						
Chi Square	0.50					0.01
2 tailed p	0.48					0.91
<u>Personality Issues</u>						
Chi Square	0.37					0.06
2 tailed p	0.55					0.81
<u>Financial Management</u>						
Chi Square	0.0	0.80		0.64		
2 tailed p	1.00	0.37		0.42		

* p < .05

N = 201

Key: Resource Consistency Patterns

1 = Consistent low - both members low (LL)

2 = Consistent high - both members high (HH)

3 = Inconsistent - husband high - wife low (HL)

4 = Inconsistent - husband low - wife high (LH)

Table B.2

Summary Table: Test of Proportions¹ Between the Proportion of Families
Located in Each Resource Consistency Group

	<u>Family Strength Variable</u>				
	<u>Resource Consistency Groups</u>				
	4	5	6	7	8
Chi Square	0.05	0.05	0.05	0.05	0.05
2 tailed p	0.83	0.83	0.82	0.83	0.82
Chi Square		0.04	0.05	0.04	0.05
2 tailed p		0.84	0.83	0.84	0.83
Chi Square			0.05	0.04	0.05
2 tailed p			0.83	0.84	0.83
Chi Square				0.05	0.05
2 tailed p				0.83	0.82
Chi Square					0.05
2 tailed p					0.83

Group 1 = Resource Consistent Low - (LLL)

Group 2 = Resource Consistent High - (HHH)

Group 3 = Resource Inconsistent

- (Father, Adolescent Resource High) - (FAH)

Group 4 = Resource Inconsistent

- (Father, Adolescent Resource Low) - (FAL)

Group 5 = Resource Inconsistent

- (Mother, Adolescent Resource High) - (MAH)

Group 6 = Resource Inconsistent

- (Mother, Adolescent Resource Low) - (MAL)

Group 7 = Resource Inconsistent

- (Parents Resource High) - (PH)

Group 8 = Resource Inconsistent

- (Parents Resource Low) - (PL)

¹ McNemar Test (Siegel, 1965).

Table B.3

Summary Table: Test of Proportions² Between the Proportion
of Families Located in Each Resource Consistency Group

		<u>Quality of Life Variable</u>					
		<u>Resource Consistency Groups</u>					
		2	4	5	6	7	8
Group 1 by	Chi Square	0.43	3.38				7.20
	2 tailed p	0.51	0.07				0.007
Group 2 by	Chi Square		1.11		2.44		
	2 tailed p		0.29		0.12		
Group 3 by	Chi Square		1.75	0.05	0.64	0.17	0.17
	2 tailed p		0.19	0.83	0.42	0.68	0.68
Group 4 by	Chi Square			0.83	0.12	0.55	0.52
	2 tailed p			0.36	0.73	0.46	0.47
Group 5 by	Chi Square				0.15	0.0	0.0
	2 tailed p				0.70	1.00	1.00
Group 6 by	Chi Square					0.04	0.04
	2 tailed p					0.85	0.85
Group 7 by	Chi Square						0.04
	2 tailed p						0.85

Key:

Group 1 = Resource Consistent Low - (LLL)

Group 2 = Resource Consistent High - (HHH)

Group 3 = Resource Inconsistent

- (Father, Adolescent Resource High) - (FAH)

Group 4 = Resource Inconsistent

- (Father, Adolescent Resource Low) - (FAL)

Group 5 = Resource Inconsistent

- (Mother, Adolescent Resource High) - (MAH)

Group 6 = Resource Inconsistent

- (Mother, Adolescent Resource Low) - (MAL)

Group 7 = Resource Inconsistent

- (Parents Resource High) - (PH)

Group 8 = Resource Inconsistent

- (Parents Resource Low) - (PL)

² McNemar Test (Siegel, 1956).

APPENDIX C

SUMMARY TABLES FOR NON SIGNIFICANT ANOVA TESTS

Table C.1

ANOVA Non Significant Tests for Couple Resource
 Consistency Patterns and Couple Coping Mean Score for Family and
 Friends and Financial Management Variables

<u>Variable</u>	S.S.	D.F.	M.S.	f	p
<u>Financial</u>	569.64	3	189.88	2.31	0.08
<u>Management</u>	16174.11	197	82.11		
	16743.75	200	83.71		
<u>Family and</u>	422.57	3	140.86	1.70	0.17
<u>Friends</u>	16321.18	197	82.85		
	16473.75	200	83.72		

N = 201

Table C.2

ANOVA Non Significant Tests for Couple Resource Consistency
Patterns and Couple Discrepancy Coping Scores for Couple Resources

<u>Variable</u>	<u>S.S.</u>	<u>Df</u>	<u>M.S.</u>	<u>f</u>	<u>p</u>
<u>Marital Satisfaction</u>					
Between	250.71	3	83.57	0.67	0.57
Within	24527.71	197	124.51		
Total	24778.42	200	123.89		
<u>Family and Friends</u>					
Between	44.02	3	14.67	0.12	0.95
Within	24734.40	197	125.55		
Total	24778.42	200	123.89		
<u>Personality Issues</u>					
Between	201.64	3	67.21	0.54	0.66
Within	24576.78	197	124.76		
Total	24778.42	200	123.89		
<u>Financial Management</u>					
Between	358.84	3	119.61	0.97	0.41
Within	24419.58	197	123.96		
Total	24778.42	200	123.89		
<u>Sexual Relationship</u>					
Between	77.98	3	25.99	0.21	0.89
Within	24700.44	197	125.38		
Total	24778.42	200	123.89		

N = 201

Table C.3

Summary of Non Significant ANOVA Tests for Family Resource
 Consistency Patterns and Family Coping (Mean and Discrepancy) Scores
 for Family Resources of Family Strength and Quality of Life

<u>Mean Scores</u>					
<u>Variable</u>	<u>S.S.</u>	<u>Df</u>	<u>M.S.</u>	<u>f</u>	<u>p</u>
<u>Family Strength</u>					
Between	883.41	7	126.20	1.95	0.07
Within	8396.23	130	64.59		
Total	9279.63	137	67.74		
<u>Quality of Life</u>					
Between	55.14	7	79.31	1.18	0.32
Within	8724.49	130	67.11		
Total	9279.63	137	67.74		
<u>Discrepancy Scores</u>					
<u>Family Strength</u>					
Between	2037.23	7	291.03	0.45	0.87
Within	83707.13	130	643.91		
Total	85744.37	1370	625.87		
<u>Quality of Life</u>					
Between	4952.27	7	707.47	1.14	0.34
Within	80792.06	130	621.48		
Total	85744.38	137	625.87		

N = 138